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NATIONAL HUMOUR

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"How far is round the green, my boy?" "Weel, when Kirkaldy plays, it's fowr miles. As ye've been playin' the day, it's aboot ten."—*Page 63.*

Frontispiece

NATIONAL HUMOUR

Scottish—English—Irish—Welsh
Cockney—American

20359
808·7

BY

REV. DAVID MACRAE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY JOHN DUNCAN

MIDLOTHIAN EDUCATIONAL
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SCOTTISH HUMOUR

SCOTTISH HUMOUR

SYDNEY SMITH once said that it would require a surgical operation to get a joke into a Scotchman's head. This remark is a great and abiding comfort to many people who offer inanities as jokes, and find that Scotch folk don't laugh at them. No doubt, as there are many Scotch jokes that the English can make nothing of, so there are many English jokes (especially of the punning kind) that Scotch folk are apt to miss. But, as a rule, it may safely be asserted that any joke which would require a surgical operation to get into a Scotchman's head is a kind and quality of joke that would justify a punitive surgical operation (with a stick or otherwise) upon the head of the man who makes it. Even Sydney Smith, when he revisited Scotland, said he would now admit that the Scotch were full of fun, though it sometimes needed a corkscrew to let it come out!

In the genuine Sense of Humour, Scotland—like the Scots Greys—"stands second to none." Even English humorists, like Dickens and Thackeray, have found no more appreciative readers, and no warmer

admirers, than the Scotch. I remember many years ago, when I was a student in Glasgow, Sydney Smith's joke was brought forward again—and seriously—by a prominent London newspaper, along with some suggestions as to the probable reasons why the Scotch were lacking in the appreciation of humour. It rather turned the tables upon the ingenious writer when the fact was made public that *Punch*, the comic paper *par excellence* (at that time) of England, had a larger circulation in Glasgow than in any city in the Empire, outside of London.

Any one who—in ignorance of Scottish literature and the Scottish people—has taken Sydney Smith's joke seriously, should read Dr. Rogers' *Century of Scottish Life*, or *Whistle Binkie*, or Dean Ramsay's *Reminiscences*, or Ford's *Thistledown*, or *Oor Ain Folk*, by James Inglis. It would be a revelation to him.

The Scottish people—and not least, the country folk, for all their seriousness of look—are rich in quaint and quiet humour. And what an array of wits, satirists, and humorists of every description the literature of Scotland presents, from the days of Sir David Lindsay, William Dunbar, Gawin Douglas, and the Royal Author of *Peebles to the Fair*, and *The Kirk on the Green*, down by Galt, Ferguson, Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Christopher North, and Aytoun, with his *Glenmutchkin Railway*, to the "Kailyarders" and the homely humorists of yester-

day and to-day, like George Roy, Tammas Bodkin, and J. J. Bell in his *Wee Macgreegor*, and perhaps best of all, Ford in his *Thistledown*. In Scottish literature we find humour of every kind and complexion, from the grim satiric humour of Thomas Carlyle to the drollery of Jeems Kaye, and the exquisite baby pictures of the author of *Keekie Bo*.

Those who imagine that Scotland lacks in humour --either in the sphere of literature, art, speech, or song--can never have seen Wilkie's "Village Politicians," "Blind Man's Buff," or "Penny Wedding"; or heard of Bailie Nicol Jarvie, Cuddie Headrigg, Caleb Balderston, or Dominie Sampson; or listened to a speech by Professor Blackie; or to the philosophic wit of Sheriff Campbell Smith; or heard James Guthrie on the Temperance platform; or Robert Wallace in Parliament; or heard old David Kennedy sing "The Laird o' Cockpen," "Duncan Gray," or "Green Grow the Rashes, O."

Humour in any people naturally shows itself most in connection with the phases of life with which they are most familiar. Hence in Scotland, where for generations the people have taken such lively interest in their kirks and kirk services, the ministers, elders, beadles, and precentors have not only furnished tempting subjects for good-natured raillery and banter, but have themselves been often conspicuous for their racy humour.

Some of the old church beadles were fine specimens of Scotch shrewdness and wit.

I remember well old James Dawson, who, in the fifties and sixties, was beadle in North Albion Street Church, Glasgow. James could crack a joke and hold his own with any minister or professor who came his way.

At the time of the marriage of King Edward (then Prince of Wales), he had got one of the white and red pocket handkerchiefs that were in vogue, embellished with stamped likenesses of the Royal Heads of Britain and Denmark. One day he was going up North Albion Street blowing his nose vigorously with this handkerchief—for he had a bad cold in his head—when he suddenly met Professor John Eadie. The Professor stopped to have a word with him, and observing the handkerchief, said, "You've got a number of grand folk, James, on that handkerchief of yours."

"Ay, Doctor," said James, preparing for another blow, "it's the only chance I hae o' gettin' my nose into genteel society."

Like most beadles of those days, James magnified his office. When a country minister, who was preaching for the day in North Albion Street, asked him if he could recommend a good beadle for the church from which he had himself come, James, after taking a deliberate pinch of snuff, and handing the box to the minister, said, gravely: "Weel, sir, had it been a bit minister body that wis wanted, there's a wheen o' them: but a beadle, sir—a beadle's no' sae easy got."

I remember at a Presbytery Examination of Students, which took place in the hall connected with that church, James, who had shewn us in, fixed his eyes on one student of portly presence and somewhat lordly mien, and said, confidentially, to one of the examiners: "You're spilin' that man makin' a mere minister o' him. He would mak' his mark as a beadle."

The old-fashioned beadles were shrewd men, knew ministers' weak points as well as their strong ones, and could sometimes discern policy not only in what the ministers preached, but in what they steered clear of.

One beadle was showing his sweetheart through the church buildings on a week-day, and, before she left, said: "Wad ye no like to hear me preachin'?"

"Preachin'! I didna ken ye could preach, Rubbert."

"O," said he, "I'm a gran' preacher. You sit there and I'll gi'e ye a screed."

She took her seat in a pew, to represent the congregation, while the beadle ascended the pulpit, and began launching forth on the subject of the Antediluvians. He became so fervid in the denunciation of their sins that he had to pause after a little and take out his pocket handkerchief to mop his perspiring brow.

"Man, Rubbert!" said his sweetheart, in admiring tones, "that's gran'. I never thocht you could preach like that. Noo, you've gi'en such a skelpin'

to the Antediluvians, could you no' get in somethin' about the sins o' the present day?—about drinkin' or sic like?"

The beadle held up his hand deprecatingly, and shook his head. "Na, na, lass," said he, "I ken the preachin' trade too weel for that!"

Neil Munro, though best known as the author of *The Lost Pibroch*, *Castle Doom*, and other romances, is also a humorist, and has created in his "Erchie" a fine specimen of the old, pawky beadle, with his keen observation and his shrewd estimate of men and things. Erchie, in speaking about wandering evangelists like Gipsy Smith, puts in a word for ministers preaching to people in their working clothes, "men wi' their keps in their jaicket pouches."

"If they did *that* (he says), the like o' Duffy, the coalman, wad ha'e to gang to kirk in his sleeved waistcoat, and his wife wi' a polka on, and the rale Duffy's wife. The wye it is the noo is that Duffy on the Sunday mornin' cuts himsel' in fower places shavin', breaks a' the nails aff his fingers puttin' a stud in his dickie, and sits through the sermon in a fair torment, wi' a tichtness aboot the knees and a pair o' 'lastic-sided buits twa sizes ower sma' for him. Mrs. Duffy's that thrang, at the same time, wondering if she washed her ears, and whaur the MacDougall's got the money frae to pey for sich grandeur, that the gospel truths wadna get into her he'rt if they were bawled at her through a speakin'-trumpet. . . . The finest sermon in the warld 'll

no' win through the black cord coat and waistcoat o' a plumber that on week-days kens the comfort o' sittin' in his shirt sleeves wi' a low red-and-white striped kahouchy collar on, contemplatin' a job that's chairged by the time. And it's a' yin ony wye ye tak' it: if ye're no gettin' a sair heid stretchin' yer neck to keep yere collar frae sawin yer lugs, ye're that proud o' yer new breeks, or that thrang pullin' doon yer cuffs so that they'll be seen, ye never hear onything frae the openin' prayer to the Doxology."

In another talk about clothes, when "Erchie" had made the remark, "It's a mercy for you and me we're no weemen," the reply is made that even we men have our eccentricities in dress—for instance, in the matter of pockets. To this Erchie agrees.

"Ay (he says), ye're richt there. Hae I no' fifteen pouches mysel' when I hae my topcoat on? Ye canna dae in Glesca without at least nine or ten, dae what ye like. Of coorse it's different in the country. Doon aboot Yoker, and Gargunnock, and them places, a' a man needs in the wye o' pouches is twa trouser yins—yin for each haund, when he's leanin' against the byre-door wonderin' whit job he'll start the morn. There's a lot o' fancy wee pouches that'll no' haud mair nor a pawn ticket aboot a Glesca man's claes, but in the country thae dae wi' less and dig them deep. Sae faur as I can see, the pouch is a new-fashioned thing a'thegither. Look at them auld chaps ye see in pictures wi' the

galvanised or black-leaded airn suits on; if ane o' them wanted a pouch he wad need to cut it himsel' wi' a sardine-opener, and then he wad peel a' his knuckles feelin' for his hankey or the price o' a pint. I am gled I wasna gaun aboot when them galvanised airn suits was the go; it must hae been awfu' sair on the nails scratching yersel'. Yer claes were made then in a biler-works; when ye went for the fit on, the cutter bashed in the slack bits at the back wi' a hammer and made it easier for ye under the oxter wi' a cauld chisel. 'I want it higher in the neck,' says you; 'Right!' says he, quite game, and bangs in twa or three extra rivets. And yer wife, if ye had one, had to gi'e yer suit a polish up every Friday when she was daein' the kitchen grate. It was the same when the Hielan's was the wye ye read aboot in books, and every Hielan'man wore the kilts. There was nae pocket in a pair o' kilts. I daursay that was because the Hielan'man never had onything worth while to put in a pocket if he had yin. He hung his snuff-mull and his knife and fork ootside his claes, and kept his skenedhu in his stockin'. It's a proof that weemen's no' richt ceevilised yet that they can be daein', like the men I'm speakin' aboot, without ony pouches. Jinnet tells me there's nae pouch in a woman's frock noosdays because it wad spoil her sate on the bicycle. That's the wye ye see weemen gaun aboot wi' their purses in their haans, and their bawbees for the skoosh-caur inside their glove, and their bonny wee watches that never gang because they're

never rowed up, hinging jist ony place they'll hook on to ootside their claes."

So much for the beadle.

The Precentor, or leader of psalmody, was another characteristic figure in the kirk in old days before organs were introduced. His duty was, when the minister had given out the psalm, to rise and lead the congregation in the singing of it.

In some churches, where the precentor was a man of musical taste and enthusiasm, the singing was admirable. But in country parishes, it not infrequently happened that the only man who could be got to undertake the work knew next to nothing of sacred music, and had very few tunes that he could sing.

I remember when I was a youth, and was with my father and the rest of the family on holiday in a remote country district, where services were held in summer in a little temporary wooden building, that my father, as a minister, was asked to take the service one Sunday.

The man who led the singing was a somewhat raw hand, but the first psalm given out was sung very well to the tune "French."

The next given out was the 15th Paraphrase, beginning—

> "As long as life its term extends
> Hope's blest dominion never ends."

I was startled to hear the precentor start "French" again. As "French" is a "common measure" tune,

and the 15th Paraphrase is in "long measure," I expected a collapse when he reached the second line, where he would find two syllables more than he had music for.

I was amused to find him get over the difficulty adroitly by simply dropping the word "never," and making the line sing thus—

"Hope's blest dominion ends."

At every alternate line he surmounted the difficulty with equal adroitness, quite regardless of the sense, but without the slightest appearance of confusion.

When, after the sermon, the closing psalm was given out, and again the precentor started "French," the explanation flashed upon me. He had no other tune; and was accustomed, therefore, if the measure was longer, to cut down the alternate lines as he had done with the 15th Paraphrase; while, if the psalm was short measure, he drew out one of the syllables sufficiently to let three notes instead of one find footing on it.

It was this difficulty that compelled another precentor when he came to the line—

"And all the angels bow,"

and had still two notes unsung, to make it run—

"And all the angels bow-ow-ow."

As for the ministers, countless are the stories told in all parts of Scotland about them—their sayings and doings, their faults and foibles, their eccentricities of character, and their *bon mots*.

When Rev. Dr. Dobie got his D.D. from an American University, Professor Eadie asked him if the University was a distinguished one. To which Dr. Dobie replied, with a twinkle in his eye, "It *is* —*now!*"

Another Glasgow minister, who had got his degree from his own University, was quizzing a co-Presbyter about *his* degree being American. "That's the special value and significance of it," said the other; "your fame, you see, had only travelled from the East to the West-end of Glasgow; mine had travelled as far as the Western Hemisphere!"

It is told of Dean Ramsay and a Highland minister with whom he was having a long day's walk amongst the glens, that they stopped at a little inn, where they sat down in the parlour and ordered two glasses of whisky.

When these were set before them, the pious Highland minister proposed that they should ask a blessing. To this the Dean assented, but when his friend had closed his eyes and begun with great solemnity to ask a blessing (Highland in length), the Dean quietly drank off his own glass first, and presently also the other.

When the minister had finished his thanksgiving, and opened his eyes, his amazement can be imagined when he beheld the two glasses standing on the table before him empty.

He turned his eyes enquiringly and upbraidingly on the Dean.

"Ah!" said the waggish Dean, "you forgot half of the Scripture warning. We are told to watch as well as pray."

Gilfillan was another noted Scottish minister, as well as author, and one who, though his genius ran more in the direction of poetry and criticism than of humour, flashed out now and again with a witty saying. Of one of his brother ministers in Dundee, whose face had a singularly lugubrious expression, Gilfillan declared that he had been specially created to furnish a frontispiece for the Lamentations of Jeremiah.

When reference was made to a man of very shady character in Dundee who was known everywhere for his pestering inquisitiveness, Gilfillan said his tombstone, when he died, should have nothing on it by way of epitaph but a large mark of interrogation. Thus:—

That, he said, would express the outstanding feature of his intercourse with his fellow-men, and also sum up all that could be said with regard to his future destiny.

Dr. John Ker was also a wag as well as a pulpit orator. When some one told him of a long series of sermons on "The Boys of the Bible" that had been

preached by Dr. M'Farlane of London—on "Samuel the Prophet Boy," "David the Shepherd Boy," "Timothy the Instructed Boy," etc.—Dr. Ker, who had been listening with marked attention, observed gravely, "He forgot 'Methusaleh the Old Boy,' and 'Esau the Broth of a Boy.'"

In old days, sermons in Scotland were of prodigious length. Not longer, let us hope, than that of the English Puritan who said, "Seventeenthly, for we must hasten!" But they were longer than the patience of the present generation could stand, unless perhaps from a pulpit orator of the first rank.

It is told of a minister who had wearied the people with a "dreich" sermon of an hour and a half, that, pausing to prepare for another flight, he cried, "And what shall I say more?" An old woman in front of the gallery who was impatient to get home, called out in reply, "Say 'Amen,' man, and sit doon. It's chappit fowr."

A friend drove me once to the Parish Church at Fenwick, where Guthrie the Covenanter had preached. In the old oak pulpit there was a half-hour sand-glass, which was still used to measure time for the preacher. When it had exhausted itself, the beadle would go up and give it another turn. If the minister, when it had measured the second half-hour, was still preaching, the beadle would go up and carry it off, as if to say, "Time has no effect on this man."

A country parish minister in Kincardineshire had

such a tremendous voice that he was popularly known as "Roarin' Harry." On a summer day, when the air was still and the windows open, they could hear his voice in the parish church across the river, at the distance of a quarter of a mile. The parish minister there—a great friend, but a bit of a wag—in announcing to his people that on the following Sunday he would be assisted at the Communion by this neighbouring minister, added, "Concerning whom it may truly be said that tho' we have sometimes heard a better preacher, we have never heard a preacher better."

A country minister who, though a good man, was notoriously defective and hesitating in his style of delivery in the pulpit, was sitting having a cup of tea with one of the old spinsters connected with his congregation, when he observed that the spout of the teapot was either choked or too narrow.

"Your teapot, Miss Kennedy," he remarked, "d-d-disna—disna rin weel."

"Ay, jist like yoursel', Mr. Broon," retorted the nettled lady. "It has an unco puir delivery."

In the days when "soondness"—soundness in doctrine—was regarded as a vital thing in the Scottish pulpit, an old elder who used to enjoy a nap regularly during the sermon, was observed by the minister to be wide awake, and listening with great interest from beginning to end, when one day an eloquent young "probationer" happened to be occupying the pulpit. The minister—perhaps a

little piqued at this—challenged the elder about it, and said he seemed quite able to keep awake when he liked.

"Ah, sir!" replied the pawky elder, "we're safe wi' you. We a' ken that you're soond—thoroughly soond—in yer doctrine. But they young birkies need to be watched carefully. Ye dinna ken what doctrine *they* may preach."

In the Established Church of Scotland, before the days of popular election, when a minister was "presented" to the parish, any parishioner had the right to lodge objections to his settlement. In one case, a parishioner, who disliked the use of "the paper," lodged the following three objections to the presentee:—First, That he read his sermon; second, That he didn't read it well; and third, That it wasn't worth reading.

When an old woman was asked, on getting home from church, what the minister had preached about, she said, after a pause, "Weel, he gi'ed oot a text, and he jist wrocht awa'."

It used to be a common practice in Scotland for ministers, on Sunday, to preach from a text at one "diet of worship," and to expound a chapter of Scripture at the other. This latter form of instruction was exceedingly valuable in the hands of able and conscientious ministers: but in the hands of some who made little preparation, and had less sense and judgment, it often degenerated into a poor and rambling commentary, "nayther edifyin' nor

divertin'," as one old lady said; and suggestive of the satirist's couplet:—

> "Commentators each dark passage shun,
> And hold their farthing candle to the sun."

It was probably of this sort of "exposition" that one frank member of the congregation said, "The minister ca's it lecturin', but I ca' it haverin'."

An old aunt of mine used to recall some of the "comments" made by a preacher of this stamp who once officiated at a prayer-meeting in connection with my father's church at Lathones. He stopped to make some remark on every verse he read; and coming to the verse which compares life to a shadow, he deemed it necessary to pause, and describe what a shadow was.

"A 'shadow,' my brethren," he said solemnly, "a shadow is a dawrk substance formed betwixt a man and a wa'."

The homely expressions—often in the vernacular—that used to be heard in Scottish pulpits were very striking, if sometimes a little amusing. A minister was praying for suitable weather for the ingathering of the crops. "O Lord," he cried, "gi'e us fair weather and windy—no' a rantin', tantin', tea-in' wind, but a winnerin', dinnerin', dryin' wind."

Dr. A. K. H. Boyd, of St. Andrews, used to tell about an old country minister who, when praying at a marriage said, "O Lord, we thank Thee that Thou hast created wumman to mak' us coamfortable."

Mr. Davidson, one of the Free Church ministers in Arran in the sixties, was a good man, but very eccentric, and some of his comments were laughable enough, and were made all the more so to strangers by his strong Highland accent.

On reading the precept, "Walk circumspectly," he said, "You've all seen a cat, my brethren, wâhkin' on the top of a wâhl covered wi' broken bottles and bits o' gless. See hoo it lifts wan fit, and then anither fit, and hoo slowly and carefully it puts it doon, to keep clear o' the sharp bits o' gl'es. And so, my freends, in this world o' snares and pitfahls, we should be like the cat on the wâhl—we should walk circumspectly."

Commenting on the story of the threefold temptation, and referring to the one on the pinnacle of the Temple, he said, "The Scriptures leave us in doubt, my brethren, as to how the two ever got up to the pinnacle's top—no mention is made of a leather" (ladder).

He never hesitated to rebuke any in the church whom he observed talking or showing levity. On one occasion some young ladies came in very late, and the rustling of their dresses attracted attention. "Ay," said the minister, after pausing to look at them, "ye come in noo to let folks see ye; and ye dress up in braw silks and a', to make folks believe that ye're fine Edinburgh leddies; but I ken fine you're nothing but jist Paisley bodies."

A venerable minister of the old school one Sunday

took to the pulpit by mistake the wrong sermon: and only discovered when he was about to begin it that part of the first leaf or two had been worn or eaten away. After a few moments of inspection and consideration, he said, "Brethren, I find that the mice have been making free with the beginning of my sermon, so that I canna tell you whaur the text is; but we'll jist begin whaur the mice have left aff, and we'll find out the text as we go along."

Peter Mackenzie, the well-known preacher and lecturer, was a Scot, born and bred, though he became best known among the Wesleyans in the North of England. Peter was a diamond, though a rough one, and his humour, if very broad at times, always wore an open, kindly smile.

At a missionary meeting in Manchester, when referring to the material advantages of Christianity, he said, "Mr. Chairman, when savages get converted they want Manchester calico. They are no longer satisfied to be dressed in sunshine."

In lecturing on Jacob and Esau, and referring to the episode of the birthright, he said, "It's a mercy Jacob didn't keep a Refreshment Room, when he charged so much for his porridge." Peter had deep sympathy with the poor, and used to pray fervently for those "with little *in* them and little *on* them."

I remember having him in Dundee, where he lectured on the Tongue. He began with the remark that he had one thing in his favour, namely, that his subject was in everybody's mouth.

In company when some public man was described as having a very large mouth, Peter said, "I should think a man like that could sing a duet all by himself."

He was very fond of a cup of good strong tea. On one occasion, as he sat at the tea-table, he said, with beaming countenance, "This is something like tea,"—adding, "I sometimes get tea so weak that it can scarcely waddle out of the pot."

On one occasion, when his pony turned the wrong way, and pranced and reared, he said afterwards, "Charlie started for the moon, but his hind legs refused to support the resolution."

Peter had his share of Scotch pawkiness as well as Scotch wit. When callers were disposed to wait, taking up more time than he could spare, he would sometimes say, "Now, we mustn't part without a word of prayer," and then dismissed them with the blessing.

Peter was a tremendous worker, and never seemed happier than when he had most to do. Once, after a week of incessant toil, he was invited by his host to remain for two or three days and take a rest. "No, no," was his reply, as he flourished his arm like a trooper about to charge; "no rest for Peter Mackenzie till he is dressed in a wooden suit, and tucked in with a shovel." *

* A biography of Peter Mackenzie, published by my old friend, the Rev. Joseph Dawson, gives a graphic account of the man and his work.

In Scotland the names of Shirra of Kirkcaldy and "Watty" Dunlop of Dumfries are still remembered in connection with their racy humour and witty replies.

It was "Watty" Dunlop who, when a Dumfries man who had been hearing Edward Irving, said, "Yon man's cracked," shrewdly and kindly replied, "Willie, you'll aften see light peepin' thro' a crack."

It was Dunlop, also, who, when paying a pastoral visit at a farm-house where the good-wife had arranged for his having something to eat, said, "I'll enjoy it better when my wark is done. But ye can hing the pan on the fire, an' I'll draw to a close in the prayer when I hear the ham fizzin'."

It was Shirra who, when a Volunteer officer, very proud of his fresh uniform, came into Mr. Shirra's church after the service had begun, and was walking about as if to find a seat, helped him to find one quickly by the remark, "Oh, man, will ye sit doon, and we'll see your new breeks when the kirk gangs oot."

Humour in the Scottish pulpit has for the most part disappeared under the more recent and stricter conceptions that now prevail as to church order and decorum. The preacher whose name is most widely associated at present with sallies of wit in the pulpit is Rev. John M'Neil, known sometimes as the "hilarious evangelist." The disappearance of humour from the pulpit has led, however, to no disappearance of it from social life, where the ministers are as well

known as ever for their racy humour, and their enjoyment of a good joke.

The following burlesque account, in ballad form, of an incident that caused some excitement and much talk at the time in ecclesiastical circles in Glasgow and Edinburgh, will be welcome to those who remember the event, especially to those who were familiar with the ecclesiastics referred to. An eminent Doctor of Divinity in Glasgow had been presented to an important charge in Edinburgh, and went through to meet the Edinburgh Presbytery. While in the club, however, he learned some facts which induced him to change his mind, and decide not to accept the Edinburgh charge. He accordingly wrote a note from the club to the Moderator of Presbytery, despatched a messenger with it, and went off to the railway station to take the first train back to Glasgow. The following verses, from the pen of a well-known Scottish divine, appeared a day or two after in the *Scotsman*. They were subsequently re-published in a volume entitled *Pictures in Pitch*, which, however, was withdrawn from circulation owing to the offence given by some of the more severe of its satires. These verses were entitled—

THE FLIGHT OF THE PRESENTEE.

The Presbytery was gathered,
Mac Grugar filled the chair;
And all the Metropolitans—
These merry men—were there.

Mac Grugar spread abroad his hands,
And "Let us pray," quoth he;
Then having prayed, he straightway called,
"Now fetch the Presentee."

The while he spake, the beadle
Stept in, with look of scare;
Saith he, "A small boy brought it
Whiles ye were at the prayer.
He whistles at the door, and craves
A shilling for his care."

This said, he laid a letter
Within Mac Grugar's hand,
Who long the superscription
And long the motto scanned.

But when he read the writing,
His brow grew black as night,
While on him the pale presbyters
Stared in amaze and fright.

A moment gazed he at them—
Then wildly smote his head—
Then with Pan-Presbyterian yell
Exclaimed, "The knave has fled!"

Then up sprang valiant Bauldie,
Whom men called The Trustee:
"Why, we are fifty fighting men,
And he one Presentee.

"Mac Grugar, thou art nimble,
And Steenie stout of lung,
And Racer of the Canongate,
Thy withers are unwrung."

They paused not: well together
Forth sped the chosen three;
While "Bring him here, alive or dead,"
Shrieked Elder Mackersee.

Forth rushed the wild Mac Grugar,
And down the hill he hurled,
Invoking general vengeance
Upon the Kirk and world.

Forth charged the stalwart Steenie,
"Ill fare my head," quoth he,
"If this hand does not collar
Yon flying Presentee."

So have you seen the gallant steer,
All maddened by the goad,
Dash its vast catapult of beef
Along the trembling road.

Forth shot the man of Canongate—
Fleet foot, exhaustless wind;
A shout of warning rose before,
An angry crowd behind.

So have you seen the courser,
Whose hoofs devour the way,
Flash past uproarious myriads
Upon the Derby day.

They gain the club together—
As one man in they rush;
All at the threshold met them
A sober lad in plush.

"What will ye here, my masters?"
He asked in mild amaze,
Uncertain that their headlong haste
Might not be due to craze.

They fetched their breath to answer,
"We seek the Presentee."
"Then you're a day behind the fair,
I grieve to state," says he.

"'Tis not ten minutes since he left,
The Western train to seek,
A carpet-bag within his hand,
A cutty in his cheek."

While yet he spake, the trio
Again were in the street;
The howls of the astonished mob
Pursued their flying feet.

"The station! quick, the station!"
Was all the word they spake,
As over brow and chest and limb
The perspiration brake.

Nay, faint not now, Mac Grugar,
The prize is still to win;
Come, Steenie, never pant for breath,
Hold on, man—give not in.

But still the man of Canongate
  Drew steadily ahead;
And when the station hove in sight
  By several lengths he led.

The snorting engine whistled,
  As down the stair he sprang;
The porters closed the carriage doors
  With consentaneous bang.

"Stop! stop!" he yelled; "thieves! murder!
  I want the Presentee."
A placid porter merely said,
  "Beware of *eau de vie*;
Upon an empty stomach
  It plays the deuce," quoth he.

And as the train moved calmly off,
  Mac Grugar reached the stair;
And his and Steenie's bellow
  Rent the bewildered air.
But none did heed, and none could tell
  If he they sought was there.

Yet men do say one passenger
  Grinned when he heard their shout;
And put his thumb unto his nose
  And spread his fingers out.

And in the ancient minster
  (On this all tales agree),
A ghastly echo still is heard
  Of "Where's the Presentee?"

Unfortunately, the Anglification in recent times of the Edinburgh advocates, and even some of the judges, has made the wit that used to distinguish the Scottish Bench and Bar almost a thing of the past. What a fund of wit and humour one finds in the records of men like Clark, Erskine, and Cockburn. There was wit, also—though sometimes savage enough—in old Lord Braxfield, whose motto would seem to have been, "Hang a thief when he's young, and he'll no steal when he's auld."

To a scoundrel who had displayed great ingenuity in defending himself at his trial, Braxfield said: "Man, ye're a vera clever chiel; but ye'll be nane the waur o' a hangin'."

When another able but somewhat merciless lawyer was about to be elevated to the Bench, and asked Clerk what title he should assume as a Lord of Session, Clerk suggested "Lord Preserve us!"

Jeffrey's wit was also sharp. When addressing the jury in a case in which a military officer, who remained in court, had been a witness, he repeatedly referred to him as "this soldier." The officer at last rose indignantly and said, "Don't call me a soldier, sir; I am an officer." "Well, gentlemen of the jury," continued Jeffrey, "this officer, who, according to his own statement, is no soldier"—and so went on with his speech, the discomfited officer finding himself caught in his own trap.

Lord Neaves was another legal humorist, whose wit often found congenial expression in verse; and

though Evolution stands in a different position to-day from what it did for years after Darwin published his *Origin of Species*. Lord Neaves' song about it reads as racily as ever:—

THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES.

Have you heard of this question the doctors among,
Whether all living things from a Monad have sprung?
This has lately been said, and it now shall be sung,
Which nobody can deny.

Not one or two ages sufficed for the feat—
It required a few millions the change to complete;
But now the thing's done, and it looks rather neat,
Which nobody can deny.

The original Monad, our great-great grandsire,
To little or nothing at first did aspire;
But at last to have offspring it took a desire,
Which nobody can deny.

This Monad becoming a father or mother,
By budding or bursting, produced such another,
And shortly there followed a sister or brother,
Which nobody can deny.

But Monad no longer designates them well—
They're a cluster of molecules now, or a cell,
But which of the two, doctors only can tell,
Which nobody can deny.

These beings, increasing, grew buoyant with life,
And each to itself was both husband and wife;
And at first, strange to say, the two lived without strife,
Which nobody can deny.

But such crowding together soon troublesome grew,
And they thought a division of labour would do;
So their sexual system was parted in two,
Which nobody can deny.

Thus Plato supposes that, severed by fate,
Human halves run about, each in search of its mate,
Never pleased till they gain their original state,
Which nobody can deny.

Excresences fast were now trying to shoot;
Some put out a feeler, some put out a foot;
Some set up a mouth, and some struck down a root,
Which nobody can deny.

Some, wishing to walk, manufactured a limb;
Some rigged out a fin, with a purpose to swim;
Some opened an eye, some remained dark and dim,
Which nobody can deny.

See, hydras and sponges and star-fishes breed,
And flies, fleas, and lobsters in order succeed,
While ichthyosauruses follow the lead,
Which nobody can deny.

From reptiles and fishes to birds we ascend,
And quadrupeds next their dimensions extend,
Till we rise up to monkeys and men—where we end—
Which nobody can deny.

Some creatures are bulky, some creatures are small,
As nature sends food for the few or for all;
And the weakest, we know, ever go to the wall,
Which nobody can deny.

A deer with a neck that is longer by half
Than the rest of its family (try not to laugh),
By stretching and stretching becomes a Giraffe.
Which nobody can deny.

A very tall pig, with a very long nose,
Sends forth a proboscis right down to his toes;
And he then by the name of an Elephant goes,
Which nobody can deny.

The four-footed beast that we now call a Whale,
Held his hind-legs so close that they grew to a tail,
Which he uses for threshing the sea like a flail,
Which nobody can deny.

Pouters, tumblers, and fantails are from the same source;
The racer and hack may be traced to one Horse;
So Men were developed from Monkeys, of course.
Which nobody can deny.

An Ape, with a pliable thumb and big brain,
When the gift of the gab he had managed to gain,
As a Lord of Creation established his reign,
Which nobody can deny.

But I'm sadly afraid, if we do not take care,
A relapse to low life may our prospects impair,
So of beastly propensities let us beware,
Which nobody can deny.

Their lofty position our children may lose,
And, reduced to all-fours, must then narrow their views,
Which would wholly unfit them for filling our shoes,
Which nobody can deny.

Their vertebræ next might be taken away,
When they'd sink to a shell-fish, or spider, some day,
Or the pitiful part of a polypus play,
Which nobody can deny.

Thus losing humanity's nature and name,
And descending through various stages of shame,
They'd return to the Monad, from which we all came,
Which nobody can deny.

One good specimen of the type of judge that once made the Scottish Bench noted for its wit, still flourishes (1903) in the person of Sheriff Campbell Smith, whose official judgments may sometimes be reversed on appeal, but whose jokes never fail.

Some of the National Characteristics of the Scottish people reveal themselves occasionally in very funny ways. Even the Patriotism which everywhere distinguishes the true Scot, and which bursts forth triumphantly in revelry and song every 25th of January, on the birthday of Scotland's national Bard, has many odd ways of showing itself. Sometimes it shows itself in the pride with which broad Scotch is used on special occasions, even by persons who ordinarily use English.

Hugh Macdonald, the author of *Rambles Round*

Glasgow, and well known all over the West of Scotland in the fifties and sixties, not only emphasised his nationality by wearing a Glengarry bonnet set jauntily on one side, with a sprig of heather stuck defiantly in it as a testimony to all men, but made it a point of honour, though his writings were in English, to speak in the broadest of Scotch.

His friend, Pat Alexander, used to give some amusing specimens of Macdonald's style of talk. He would say to his friend, Alexander Smith, the poet: "I like ye weel, Sandy. But as for yer poetry, as ye ca't, it's little I can mak' o't. Jist a blether o' braw words to my mind; an' bit whirly-whas they ca' *romages*. I can mak' neither head nor tail o't."

He could not bear to hear children speak of "papa" and "mama." "What ails folk," he would say, "at 'faither' and 'mither,' as ye hae them gien ye in the Scripters? But folk here hae a' gotten so *feine* noo, that Scripter's no' guid enough for them. 'Papaw'! I scunner to hear't. Lod, if ony bairn o' mine was to ca' me 'papaw,' I think I'd jist fent."

For Scotland's national bard, Macdonald cherished unbounded admiration. He thought none of the poets equal to "Rabbie," as he called him. "Keats!" he would say, "Keats was a puir bit penny whustle o' an English cratur, no' fit to haud a candle to Rabbie. Gi'es ye nacthin' to get a grip o'. Jist like your ain whirly-whas, Sandy. Hech! but it's thin, thin."

"Shakspere?" he would say dubiously. "Weel a weel; nae doot, a very great poet. I wadna say that even oor Rabbie could hae written *Hawmlet*. But div ye think Shakspere could hae written *Tam o' Shanter*? De'il the fears o' him."

I remember once at Montreal being amused at another way in which Scottish pride in things Scotch, sometimes shows itself. It was on St. Andrew's Day. The weather was intensely cold, and a wind that seemed to have come straight from the Polar regions, sharpening itself on every iceberg it passed, was blowing through the icy streets; but the Scottish Societies turned out in force, and marched to church, headed by two kilted pipers, to hear their annual Scottish sermon. At the St. Andrew's dinner at night, every gentleman had a sprig of heather in his button hole: and though the menu was long and varied, the triumphal moment was that which saw the introduction of the haggis. The piper came marching in first, blowing as it he were leading the whole Highland Brigade into action. Then came the waiter bearing aloft "the king o' puddin' race," which the company no sooner beheld than they sprang to their feet and cheered till they saw the haggis safely deposited in front of the chairman.

I remember an old Scotchman out in Belville, who used to celebrate in a way of his own the anniversary of the battle of Bannockburn. He had brought out a box of earth dug from the historic field; and this-

he cherished in his far-off home, as the children of Israel cherished the Ark of the Covenant. Every year, when the anniversary of Bannockburn came round, he brought forth this box of sacred soil, turned it out, and planted his foot upon it. And though he could not say, like Macgregor, that his foot was on his native heath, seeing that no heath was there, he could yet say that he was standing on his native soil, and *that* the very soil of Bannockburn. And there the old patriot stood, and sang exultingly—

> "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
> Scots wham Bruce has often led;
> Welcome to your gory bed,
> Or to victory."

An amusing illustration of the inspiring influence, even on children, of the very names of the heroes of Scottish independence, was told me by a Stirling friend who, on taking his family to the coast, went down to the shore with his little boy to let him have his first bathe in the sea. The sight of the great sea, however, awed the boy, and when he had stripped and began to wade out, not knowing where the next step might take him, he became increasingly nervous. With difficulty his father induced him to go out till the water reached his waist, then told him to duck. The boy hesitated, prepared two or three times to duck, but each time his courage failed.

"Come, George," said his father, "don't be a coward."

The word stung the boy, and bracing himself for the desperate task, he cried "Wallace and Bruce!" and made the plunge, coming up again streaming and gasping, but gloriously triumphant.

The Scot never forgets the field on which Scotland's independence was finally re-established; nor is he slow to joke his English friends about it, good-naturedly, when a chance occurs.

One Englishman, who was finding fault with everything Scotch, said to a Scottish farmer, that nobody who had once seen England, would ever think of coming and remaining in Scotland. The farmer, who was a bit of a wag, replied, "Weel, tastes differ. I'll tak' ye till a place, no' far frae Stirling, whaur thirty thousand o' yere countrymen have been for five hunner years, an' they've never thocht o' leavin' yet."

Scottish patriotism, however, though now and again showing itself in odd forms, is full of kindness and the spirit of a larger fraternity. It combines in a notable degree intense love of Scotland and pride in Scotland's history, with whole-hearted loyalty to the British Crown and the British flag, as symbolising the unity of the British Empire, of which Scotland, as well as England, forms an integral and independent portion. It is only when Scotland's voice on questions of her own is drowned in Parliament by the overwhelming votes of English members, who know little, and seem to care less, about Scottish interests; or when dishonour is

done to her by the unseemly substitution of the terms "England" and "English" for "Britain" and "British," that old animosities are apt to be rekindled: and that the appropriateness of the thistle as a national badge becomes apparent, with its motto, *Nemo me impune lacessit*, which in the vernacular would read, "Dinna meddle wi' me, or I'll jag!"

In the days of Nelson, some one, at a gathering of Scotchmen, said he wondered at Nelson signalling "*England* expects every man to do his duty," and saying nothing of Scotland, which supplied some of the bravest and best men to the British fleet. To which, another member of the company replied wittily, "Why should he speak o' Scotland '*expectin*'? England might only be able to 'expect,' but Scotland *kent*—and kent fine—that every son o' hers would dae his duty. There was nae fear and nae doot on that point."*

* Nelson's signal is so often referred to as an excuse for speaking of "England" where "Britain" is meant, that three things are well worth noting in connection with it. The first is that no misuse of the word by Nelson could alter the Treaty of Union, or excuse England for violating the pledge she gave there to use the united name for the United Kingdom. The second is the fact, recorded in James' *Naval History*, Vol. III., p. 302, that the use of the word "England" in the signal was not Nelson's suggestion, but that of the officer to whom he spoke of signalling something to stimulate the men of the fleet. The Admiral's own suggestion was to signal, "Nelson expects every man to do his duty:" but when the officer suggested "England expects," Nelson said, "Certainly, certainly," and

The Scotch, with their strong love of kith, kin, and country, are naturally "clannish." It was said by one of the Georges, that he never knew one Scotchman speak ill of another Scotchman, unless he had a special reason for doing so. The Scotch, all over the globe, are noted for the pleasure they take in helping one another. A teller in an English bank once expressed to me his concern when a Scotchman was appointed manager: "for we find," he said, "that when one Scotchman gets in, he soon makes room for more."

The heartiness with which Scotch folk abroad welcome any brother Scot who comes their way, is an experience of which every Scot, who has travelled much, brings home delightful recollections.

Two well-known Glasgow gentlemen—brothers—told me, that when travelling in Russia, sometimes by out-of-the-way routes, making their way with French and a little German, for they knew no Russian, they arrived famishing at one little town,

so the signal was given in its altered form. The third thing worth noting is that Nelson spoke regularly of the fleet not as the English, but as the "British fleet." In his private diary, written just before the battle, he utters the following prayer: "May the great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe, a great and glorious victory, and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature of *the British fleet*." Again in a codicil to his will, he refers to "the *British fleet* under my command." See *Dispatches and Letters of Lord Nelson*, by Sir H. Nicolas, Vol. VII., pp. 139, 141.

where they could find nobody able to understand their enquiries, either in French or German, as to where they could get dinner. Peering in at a shop-window, they saw an intelligent looking old woman behind the counter; and one brother waited at the door while the other went in to see if he could make himself understood by her. He tried French in vain; tried his German, also in vain. The woman talked a great deal to him in Russian, as if to ascertain what he wanted; but as he had no knowledge of Russian, her speech was as unintelligible to him as his was to her. Meantime, the famishing brother at the door, seeing no hope of any result, exclaimed impatiently, "Tuts! come awa'; and leave that bletherin' cratur alane."

No sooner had he uttered these words, than the old woman's face lighted up with delighted astonishment. "Aa!" she said, "are ye Scotch? So am I. I come frae Paisley."

Needless to say, that no further enquiries about dinner were needed, as the best that the good old woman had was immediately and freely at their service.

While the Scotch all stand together when the national character and credit are concerned, they are not the less fond of poking fun at one another. The Aberdeen people are twitted with their unbounded admiration for the Granite City, and their sense of its importance. "Tak' awa Aiberdeen," one is reported to have exclaimed, "tak' awa'

Aiberdeen, and ten miles roond it, and whar are ye?"

Greenock has its rainy reputation. It is a story often told at its expense, that when a tourist after several days of incessant rain in Greenock, asked a little girl, "Does it always rain here?" she replied, "Na; it sometimes *snaws*."

Disraeli once said, "Keep your eye on Paisley." But Paisley is noteworthy for more than its political grit, and boasts of having sent out in its time some of the most notable literary men of Scotland, and some of Scotland's most famous singers. As for poets, the joke is that everybody in Paisley is a poet. At one public dinner, when the toast of "The Poets of Paisley" was proposed, nobody proceeded to drink it except the gentleman who proposed it. But as soon as he had drunk it, all the rest of the company rose to acknowledge the compliment paid them, for they were all poets!

There are sometimes passages of wit also between the rival cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow—about which old Dr. Ritchie used to say, that Edinburgh *was* the capital, but Glasgow *had* the capital.

The Glasgow folk say that Edinburgh is an "east-windy and a west-endy" place; while the Edinburgh people retort that the best thing about Glasgow is the admirable facility provided by rail and steamboat for getting away from it.

But when the national reputation is concerned all parts of the country are at one; and when the Scot

takes up the cudgels for the superiority of his country, he is not to be beaten by ordinary argument.

A Scotch artisan was standing up for his country amongst a group of English fellow-workers at the Liverpool Docks. Whatever they boasted of that was English, he maintained was still better in Scotland—scenery, sermons, songs, gooseberries, mutton, butter, and everything else.

"Well, now," said one of the Englishmen, "what about plums? I've been in Scotland, and once tasted Scotch plums. And I want you to say, honestly, if you think Scotch plums better than English plums."

"Certainly," replied the Scot, without hesitation. "Nae plooms I like sae weel as Scotch plooms. But I maun premise that I like plooms *soor*." With this postulate his position became unassailable.

When Johnson was compiling his Dictionary, he defined "Oats" thus: "In Scotland, food for men; in England, for horses."

He read the definition to a Scotch friend, and asked him how he liked it.

"Couldn't be better," said the Scot. "And you might have added that there is no food equal to it; for where will you find such horses as in England, and where such men as in Scotland?"

One of the sharpest answers that Johnson ever got was after a gruff remark on a kindred topic. At dinner one day, during his tour in Scotland, his hostess asked him how he liked the hotch potch.

"It's very good for hogs," he said.

"Then, Doctor, let me help you to a little more," she said, with a bland smile.

The Scotch are a hard-headed people, with strong personal convictions, and with a quiet self-satisfaction and confidence in their own judgment that is sometimes irritating to English neighbours.

A country tailor was at a public dinner as a delegate. When the asparagus was going round, he took a stalk of it as he saw others doing, but began to eat at the wrong end. His next neighbour said: "Excuse me, sir; but the other end is the end for eating."

To whom Sandy replied, with calm self-satisfaction, "Thenk ye, kindly. But *I prefer this end.*"

An Edinburgh minister was officiating for a few weeks for a friend, in a country district where Calvanistic orthodoxy and Sabbath observance were of the strictest. On the first Sunday, the minister, after service, took his stick in his hand, and set off to enjoy a stroll. On the outskirts of the village, he happened to pass the house of one of the elders. The old man, who had observed him, came out, and asked if he was going anywhere on a work of mercy.

"No," said the minister, "I am just enjoying a meditative walk amidst the beauties of Nature."

"I was just suspectin' as muckle," said the elder. "But you that's a minister o' the Gospel should ken that this is no' a day for ony sic thing."

"You forget," said the minister, "that our Lord

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Himself walked in the fields with His disciples on the Sabbath Day."

"Weel," said the elder, doggedly, "I ken that. But I dinna think the mair o' *Him*, ayther, for it."

The Scot, like most people, enjoys an honest compliment, but does not usually like to show it. Once, when Queen Victoria was on her way to Balmoral, a gentleman in Perth, who has a magnificent vinery, sent a basket of his finest hothouse grapes, to be handed, with his compliments, into the Royal carriage. The Queen not only accepted them, but wrote from Balmoral complimenting the gentleman on the singular excellence of his fruit. The gentleman knew how proud his gardener would be at such a compliment—and from the Queen. So he took the note down to the vinery, and handed it to him to read, saying, "There, John: that's from the Queen." The gardener took the note, read it slowly and carefully, as if checking an account, and, after a reflective pause, said to his master, "She disna say onythin' aboot sendin' back the basket."

The Scotch get credit for canniness and caution, not only in conduct but in speech. If with the glass falling, and a wet-looking sky darkening overhead, you ask a farmer if it is going to rain, you will probably get the reply, "Weel, I wadna say but it might." If you ask his opinion of a song, he is apt (though he has greatly enjoyed it) to confine himself to the guarded remark, "No' so bad."

A story is told of a man who had just returned to

Scotland after many years' absence, and was inquiring about the people he used to know.

"Where's oor auld freend, Sandy M'Pherson?" he asked.

"I dinna ken," said the other, cautiously. "I dinna ken whaur he is: but he's deid."

This reminds one of the man who, the night before he was hanged, began a letter to his relatives in these words: "Before this reaches you I shall have gone on that journey from whence no traveller returns, that we have any authentic account of."

The Scotch have a metaphysical turn, which Sydney Smith declared that they carry even into flirtation. At a dance in Edinburgh he caught the fragment of a remark as a couple stood near him for a moment—"What you say, my Lord, is very true of love in the abstract, but——"

The average Scot has little sympathy with fussyness or petulance. An irascible old gentlemen left his luggage on the platform at Ladybank Junction, with instructions to the porter to put it into the train for Perth. On returning from the refreshment room, he took his seat in the train, which he saw preparing to start, but on looking out at the window just as the train began to move, he beheld his luggage still lying on the platform. In frantic excitement, he vociferated to the porter who was standing near it. The porter looked at it, and replied calmly, "Yer luggage is no' sic a fule as yersel'; you're in the wrang train."

The Scotch are often joked about their fondness for the "bawbee." This opinion of them can scarcely be derived from the elders who have charge of the collection-plate. These officials, as a rule, find that there is no coin which they are more ready to part with. They would probably be glad if the people developed a little more fondness for that modest coin, kept it to themselves and put something worthier in the plate.

However that may be, carefulness about money, in so far as it is a national characteristic, is easily accounted for. Scotland was long a poor country—kept poorer by her long, resolute struggle with England for the maintenance of her national independence—a struggle successful, but necessarily exhausting; while some districts, which have since become the wealthiest by reason of the discovery and development of their mineral resources, were in those days amongst the poorest. Hence thrift became a needful virtue, was highly honoured, and took its place as a characteristic of the Scottish people.

They certainly are often enough bantered about it. The English Archdeacon of Calcutta declared that Saint Andrew had been chosen by the Scots as their patron saint, because he was the disciple who discovered the lad with the barley loaves and fishes.

A story is told of a Scotch lad who, having returned from a first visit to London, was giving his experiences. "It's a grand place to see," he

said, "but an awfu' place for spendin' siller. I hadna been twa hours in London when bang gaed a saxpence."

A friend in England told me that, when they were removing the things from one house to another, their old Scotch servant came upon an emetic powder that had been left, and had evidently lain long, in a dusty drawer. It was of no use to any one, but it had cost money, and she could not bear to see it wasted, so she mixed it up and swallowed it.

Paul Blouet ("Max O'Rell") tells the story of a Scot who was set upon by three robbers, who demanded his money or his life. He fought the whole three rather than lose his money; and before he was overcome, he had killed two of them. The third, who brought him down with a blow from behind, just as he had felled his second assailant, searched his body, and found only sixpence.

"Max O'Rell" declared that if the man had had another sixpence to add to his vigilance and desperation, he would have triumphed over the third man also.

The story is told in Aberdeenshire about a countryman in a remote part of that county who had got a newly-coined sovereign, in days when such a coin was still an extraordinary curiosity in those parts, and he went about for some time showing it at the charge of a penny each sight. Owing to pecuniary difficulties, however, he had to part with it. It was only a few days later that a farmer called,

and asked for a sight of the coin, tendering at the same time, the usual penny. "Aa, man!" said the other, "it's awa'. But," he added eagerly, as a new thought struck him, "I'll show ye the cloutie it was row't in for a bawbee."

Birrell, in his *Life of Sir Frank Lockwood*, tells a story of "Bob" Reid, who, when appointed, Solicitor-General in 1894, got his name put on the door, but with only one coat of paint, the reason assigned being that, with Scotch thriftiness, he didn't think it worth spending money on additional coats, when the Government's tenure of office was so insecure.

It is told of some country folk in Caithness, that when warned that the end of the world was at hand, they limited themselves to buying coals by the sack, lest there should be any quantity left over—which might be used against themselves.

A Scottish gentleman in London, who had an uncle (a decent old Free Kirk farmer from Caithness) visiting him in the city, took him on Sunday to St. Paul's where a prayer book was handed to him when the service was beginning. He had never seen the English prayer-book before, and his nephew observed him peering curiously into it. By and by, as leaf after leaf was turned, he saw a look of anxiety, deepening almost to alarm, gathering in his uncle's face. Next thing he observed was his uncle laying down the book, picking up his hat stealthily, and making his way to the door. Thinking he was ill,

his nephew followed him. On getting outside, he said, "What did you come out for? Not ill, I hope?"

"No; but it was enough to mak' me ill to see yon list o' collections."

"Collections? Why, there's only the offertory near the end."

"Weel," said his uncle, "they shouldna mark so mony collections in the book. When I turned ower the leaves, there was nacthin' but 'Collect' and bits o' prayers, and then 'Collect' again, and mair prayers, and ower the pages, 'Collect' again! Dod! says I to mysel', if I bide till a' thae collections is ta'en, I'll no' hae a bawbee left in my pooch!"

I remember an Irish gentleman in Limerick telling, with great gusto, about a party of Scotch artizans who visited Limerick on a holiday tour. One wet day as the "trippers" were straggling along, one of them, in crossing the street, was knocked down in the mud by a jaunting car, and lay unconscious. Another of the party rushed up, with terror and excitement depicted in his face, at the same moment that a Limerick shopkeeper ran forward to help. Seeing the other's excitement, the shopkeeper said, sympathetically, "Is he a relation of yours, sir?"

"Na," cried the other, "but he's got on a pair o' my breeks!"

This concern for the safety of the borrowed "breeks" would certainly not have been the first thought in an Irishman's mind: but the Irish might

not be the worse of a little more of the carefulness about which they sometimes joke the Scotch.

The Scottish farmers used to be well known for their thrift, and often, in spite of high rents and bad seasons, left their families well off.

Half a dozen farmers were returning by train from the weekly market at Perth, and were speaking about a neighbouring farmer who had died, leaving an unusually large sum of money to his widow.

"Ay, but ye see he was lang at it," said one; "he was weel ower seventy."

"Man," said another, "I've sometimes thocht to mysel' that Methuselah must have been worth a power o' money when *he* dee'd, if he was onything o' a savin' kin' o' man ava."

Numberless are the jokes cracked also about the Scotch folks' love o' whisky.

It now turns out from the official returns that the English consume more spirits per head of the population than the Scotch do. But, unfortunately, Scotland has long had a name for whisky drinking; and it will apparently be long yet before she can effectively challenge it. There are still too many ready to say "ditto" to the old woman who, hugging the black bottle like a baby in her arms, sang—

> "It's cauld i' the skin,
> But it's sweet i' the mou'."

Everywhere, Scotch folk are supposed to be fond of whisky, and are joked about it. An Irish-American,

boasting of the magnitude of his adopted country, said, "We've got caves in Kentucky so big that you could hide Scotland in one of them, so that it could never be found—except for the smell of the whisky."

It is told of an old Highlander on his way round the Mull of Kintyre on a wild day, when the steamer was rolling and heaving, that he stood holding on to the gunwale with a face indicating that he was in the last stage of sea-sickness; while at the same time he was making convulsive efforts to keep something back.

A sympathising friend said earnestly, "Let it go, Donal'; better let it go."

"Man," said Donald, convulsively, "I canna think to let it go—it's whusky!"

An English doctor—fond of a hit at the Scotch—once remarked that the most extraordinary case of the cure of squint he ever knew, was that of an old Scotch woman who came into the Eye Infirmary with a squint so terrible that it seemed as if each eye were trying to look into the other.

This doctor declared that she was cured in this way: The Infirmary doctor took two glasses of whisky, held them for a moment in front of her nose, and then slowly drew them apart. One of her eyes eagerly followed the one glass: the other eye eagerly followed the other: and the cure was complete!

A ploughman went into a barber's shop to get a

shave. The barber was the worse of drink, and in shaving the man, cut his cheek in several places.

When the ploughman got up and saw his bleeding face in the glass, he went to the wash-stand, took a great mouthful of water, and, after looking in the glass again, spat out the water in the basin.

"What's a' that for?" hiccoughed the barber.

"Ou," said the man placidly, "I wis jist tryin' if my mouth wad still haud in."

The story is told of a canny Scot that, when charged with being three sheets in the wind, he retorted, "Toots, man! it's my legs that's drunk. Ma heid's perfeckly sober."

While, however, jokes enough are cracked about Scotch drinking, it will be a happy day for Scotland when she wholly frees herself not only from any charge of drunkenness, but from the drinking customs out of which drunkenness (in England as well as in Scotland) inevitably flows.

The religious ideas of some classes of the people in country districts are odd enough. The minister of Inverallochy called to see a sick fisherman who was ill. Before leaving, he said, kneeling down by the bedside, "Let us offer up prayer." The fisherman, who had always associated prayer at a bedside with serious illness and probably impending death, started up with alarm and exclaimed, "Prayer! Oh, Lord, has it come to that?"

Donald M'Cleave of Caithness was a man much in request amongst the country folk for what was re-

garded as his great gift of prayer. All his emotions and anxieties expressed themselves in prayer, some of them taking forms ridiculous enough, though nothing was further from Donald's thoughts than levity or irreverence. Once when returning with his creel after a great snowstorm, he got off the track, and found himself sinking in a deep snowdrift. Fearing that he was going to sink altogether, and be lost, he cried, "Oh, guid Lord, come doon, and help's oot o' this pickle!"

He had hardly offered the prayer when (before any of his companions could reach him) he found his feet touching the ground beneath, and scrambled up out of the drift to the snow-covered road.

Whereupon he called out, as he glanced upwards, "Ye needna bother yoursel' noo, guid Lord, for I've got oot mysel'!"

An Auchmithie fishing fleet was caught in a tremendous storm, and scattered: but all the boats managed at last to reach the harbour, except one, which had no one in it but an old man, and which had disappeared.

Full of anxiety for the old man's safety, an eager watch was kept; and at last, in the early dawn, the boat was sighted making for the harbour. A crowd waited for her on the beach, and the old man was welcomed as one back from the dead.

The old man said gravely, "Ay, it wis prayer that saved me. It wis a prayer I pit up to God."

Some of them asked eagerly what he had said.

"Weel," said the old man, "I jist cast up to Him, that it would be a fell nesty trick for Him to droon an auld man lik' me, when he catched me oot in the boat by mysel'."

The devotion of the old Scottish servants or retainers—especially to families with which their people had in one way or another been connected, perhaps for generations—often showed itself in forms at once pathetic and ludicrous. Mr. Froude used to tell about an old Scotch nurse who was the sole depository of a mysterious secret affecting the descent of property, and touching the good name of the house in which she lived. When she came to die, a priest urged her to confess, and warned her that the safety of her soul was at stake. "The safety o' *my* soul!" she exclaimed; "and would you put the honour of an old Scottish family in competition wi' the soul o' a poor cratur like me?"

The Scotch are well known for their love of theological distinctions; and also for the tenacity with which they cleave to their distinctive principles. In this connection, the Duke of Argyll, when in office, once declared at a public meeting that the government of India was a mere joke compared with the management of the Scotch Education Bill. One of the members of the Council of India had come to him one day in absolute despair, and said, "The whole building is full of Scotchmen." The Duke said he gave what comfort he could by remarking that the more Scotchmen the better. At the same

time he told the public meeting that, glad as he was to see Scotchmen, there was one character in which Scotchmen were very formidable men to meet, and that was when they came to what is called the "lifting up of testimonies." The worst was that their testimonies were sometimes absolutely contradictory. One deputation had come on that occasion to deplore that there seemed reference in the Bill to religious education, with which the Government had absolutely nothing to do, and against which those whom they were there to represent, felt bound to lift up their testimony. This deputation had just gone, when another came in to deplore that in the Bill, the Government was shirking the imperative duty of stating clearly that religious education was to be given!

Dr. Thomas Guthrie used to tell about a maid-servant who refused to feed the cows on the Sabbath, though she was willing to milk them. It was however, with her, no mere caprice. When challenged about it, she said, "Weel, ye see, the coos canna milk theirsel's, so milkin' them's a wark o' necessity. But let them oot tae the fields and they'll feed theirsel's weel enough."

Some of the little caddies on St. Andrews Golf Links are credited with pretty keen observations. An eminent statesman was trying his "'prentice hand" with the clubs, when a caddie, who had been watching him, said to the gentleman he was attending, "He may be a guid Parliament hand,

but he's no a guid golfer. Ye see, it tak's a man wi' brains to be a golfer."

This is as good as the reply of another caddie to one of our political lights, who asked—"How far is round the green, my boy?"

"Weel, when Kirkaldy plays (replied the boy, referring to the noted professional), it's fowr miles. As ye've been playin' the day, it's aboot ten."

The sayings of the young folk furnish, in every country, plenty of material for amusement, and not least so in Scotland.

There was a touch of the Scottish metaphysician in the problem with which one little fellow perplexed his mother, as he had evidently also perplexed himself, when, after he had been wrestling with a succession of arithmetical questions on his slate, he said, looking up earnestly into his mother's face, "Mither, whaur div a' the figures gang when they're rubbit oot?"

To the average child few things are more suggestive of misery than the idea of being hungry and having no prospect of getting anything to eat. But sympathy for a fellow creature in such circumstances has rarely taken a more grotesque form than in the case of a little girl whose mother was teaching her Bible history from a book of pictures. The child looked for some time at the picture of Daniel in the lions' den, surrounded by huge lions. Presently she began to cry. The mother, anxious to encourage this token of sympathy, asked what she was crying

for. "That wee lion," said the child in piteous tones, pointing to one crouching away in a remote corner of the cave, "that wee lion—it'll no' get ony."

Sometimes, when I find the mistaken sense in which even simple expressions may be taken up by children, I wonder what impressions, quite unintended, may have been made on their minds by words used in a sermon, or something they have heard read. Once when reading at prayers the story of the widow and her two mites, I asked a little niece who was with us what the two mites were, to which she replied, "Two wee babies."

Mistaking one word for another is not an uncommon thing even amongst grown people. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that children should often err in the same way.

A little sister of mine, when we were children, and when (at morning prayers) we were, as usual, reading verse about, read hers—"Use hospitality without *girning*." It was not a bad substitute after all (in view of the sense) for the word "grudging."

I remember hearing of the superintendent of a Sunday School who, in the course of general examination, said, "We are told of a saint who took the infant Jesus in his arms and said, 'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.' Can any of you tell me what aged saint that was?" A small boy held up his hand and promptly replied, "Cinnamon!"

Scotch people are not apt like the Irish to stumble into the kind of blunder known as the "bull." But

the minister did it who commenced his speech by saying that he would like to say a few words before he began. So did the old lady when, with the newspaper in her hand, she declared that she would give up this paper and try another, for as she said, "I never see the death o' a single livin' cratur that I ken."

And while the Scotch have, as a rule, been rather contemptuous of puns, they have always had some punsters amongst them. When John Clerk of Eldin was raised to the Bench, he selected the title of Lord Eldin, from his family estate. On its being suggested to him that the title was too similar to that of Lord Eldon, he said, "The difference is all in my 'i' (eye)."

In a case in the Court of Session over a ruffian who had mutilated a farmer's cattle by cutting off their tails, Lord Cockburn said to the farmer afterwards, "You can sell the cattle now, but it will have to be wholesale, for they can never be *retail'd*."

When Henry Erskine — on a change of ministry — was appointed to succeed Dundas as Lord Advocate, the two met in Parliament House. After a few words, Erskine said he must be off to order his silk gown.

"For all the time you are likely to be in office," said Dundas, suggestively, "you are welcome to the use of mine."

"Thank you," said Erskine; "but I couldn't think of adopting any of your *abandoned habits*."

Dr. Wm. Robertson, of Irvine—well known in his time as the "poet-preacher" of Scotland—was as full of wit as he was of eloquence.

When Dr. Johnston, of Limekilns, told Robertson that in Belgium he had gone out to see the field of Waterloo, and instead of buying any of the bogus relics—Birmingham bullets and such like—he had when on the spot cut and brought home a switch. "Then," said Robertson, "all we can say about your achievements at Waterloo is that you *cut your stick!*"

On one occasion Dr. Caird was walking with him along the High Street of Irvine when a shopkeeper's little girl, who was running past with some butter, stopped to get a word and a smile from Robertson, for the children were as fond of him as he was of them. When after a pleasant word from him she ran gaily off on her mission, Caird asked Robertson jocularly, "Is that one of the pillars of your kirk?"

"No," said Robertson; "she is a flying butt(e)ress."

In one thing the Scotch are quite like other folk, and that is in the timidity and almost terror which some of the lads feel when the time comes for "popping the question." Young fellows who, on the battlefield, would face the fire of the enemy without flinching, sometimes tremble when that critical moment arrives. A farmer's son who was in love with the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, but had never plucked up courage enough to propose, anxiously consulted his mother one evening when the damsel was having tea at their farm. His mother

advised him to ask her that very night. He promised to try, but was trembling with anxiety and excitement.

"Hoot, Jamie," said his mother, "keep up yer heart."

"I'd rayther need to keep it doon, mither," said the agitated swain, "it's up in my throat."

The difficulty of a timid lover is often increased when there is excessive innocence and simplicity on the part of the young lady. A young mechanic was desperately in love with a bonnie lass whom he had known from childhood, but towards whom a new and tenderer flame had now kindled in his heart. Of this she seemed to remain so utterly unconscious, that he felt himself helpless. He privately consulted a friend, who advised him to call at the house every night, and always inquire if she was in. He faithfully did so, but with no better result. She was hearty and frank as ever, treating him as if he had been her brother. He became desperate. One night, when she had come out to the little gate in the lane with him, and was bidding him good night, he held her hand longer than usual, and said tremblingly, "Mary! isn't this—isn't this Friday?" She said "Yes." "And you remember I was here last Friday, and I've been here every night since, and always asked for you, Mary." "Is that so?" she said, without apparently the least suspicion of what he meant by it. In perfect desperation, he said, "Oh, Mary, Mary, do you no' begin to—to—*to smell a rat?*"

Usually, however, in Scotland, as elsewhere, the young lady is quicker to discern the state of matters: and, if the lover is too bashful, she is usually ready to help him through—though not always with the outspoken frankness of the servant girl who, thinking her lover had courted her long enough without proposing marriage, said at last, "Noo, Jock, if ye're ginna tak's, tak's; and if ye're no' ginna tak's, tell's."

Many are the amusing incidents that might be given in connection with Scottish wedded life.

A widow, still in the prime of life, who had buried three husbands, called to arrange with the minister about her marriage with a fourth.

"Oh, Betty," said the minister upbraidingly, "this is surely rather much."

"Weel, sir," said Betty, "I wad hae preferred ane, and nae mair. But nae wumman was ever sae fashed wi' a set o' deein' men."

Some Paisley weavers were speaking about their ministers. One said that it was wonderful how much his minister could bring out of Scripture. He had known him preach several sermons from one text. Another said his minister surpassed that; for he had preached six sermons from the shortest text in the whole Bible.

"But that's naethin' to my wife," said the third. "She's been preachin' to me for sixteen years frae nae text at a'."

A story is told of a Scotch couple which illustrates

the risk that a short temper often introduces into married life. A working-man came home for dinner, and sat down to a plate of broth.

"This kail's cauld," he said when he had tasted it.

"It's no cauld," said his wife. "It's as het as is good for you."

"I tell you it's cauld," persisted the man.

"But I tell you it's no' cauld," retorted the wife tartly.

Temper became hot on both sides; voices louder; and a quarrel ensued that ended in the indignant young wife going back to her mother.

Friends intervened, and after remonstrances and persuasions addressed to both, got them reconciled. When they again sat down together at their own fireside, the man said in a kindly tone, "Weel, Janet, I confess that I was foolish, speakin' to ye as I did. But, sure's death, since I was a boy, I never likit cauld kail."

"But the kail wisna cauld," said his wife.

"Noo, Janet, jist confess. The kail *wis* cauld."

"The kail wisna cauld!"

"I say, it wis."

"I say, it wisna."

And so the quarrel broke out again—history not recording how it was ultimately settled.

Many specimens of Scotch "pawkiness," shrewdness, and wit, in the way of putting things, have been given in the companion volume *A Feast of Fun*, but some additional ones may be given here.

A woman said of her lazy son, "If sleep wis wark, oor Jock wad mak' something oot o' his overtime."

A man who was afflicted with a hacking cough was standing by a churchyard wall when a friend, passing, said, "That's a bad cough you've got, Tammas."

"Ay," said Tammas, "but there's a wheen folk in there that wad be gled to hae it."

"Poor fellow!" said a passenger on board one of the deep-sea steamers, to a fellow-passenger who was leaning over the rail unswallowing, with interjected groans, all that was in him—"poor fellow, are you sick?"

"Am I sick?" repeated the other, looking round with a look of mingled wretchedness and upbraiding; "div ye think I'm daein' this for fun?"

When the son of a Kaffir chief came and studied in Scotland, and on returning as a missionary, took with him a white bride, the minister who tied the knot said confidentially to a friend, "My only concern is about the children, in case they should be shepherd-tartan."

At a Burns dinner, a Glasgow Celt made his appearance in the kilt, which was much admired.

"He disna deserve muckle credit for that," said his brother with a twinkle in his eye. "Dugal wears a kilt because his feet's so big that he canna get them through a pair o' trewsers."

Two travellers, in a hotel, sat up discussing the question of public-houses. Next morning, one of

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"Dugal wears a kilt because his feet's so big that he canna get
em through a pair o' breasers."—*Punch*.

them who had found himself in a bed with unexpected company of the parasite order, mentioned it to his friend, adding naively that his only objection to bugs was their way of making a living. "Well," said his friend, "that's exactly my position with regard to publicans."

A Wesleyan minister was visiting Scotland on missionary business, and was accompanied by his wife. One day when staying with a farmer, and speaking of some fine fruit that had been set on the table, the lady remarked that very few people could say what she was able to say, namely, that though she had lived for years in apple-growing districts she had never in all her life eaten either an apple or a pear. To which remark the farmer, after a pause, replied, "It's a pity but ye had been in the gairden o' Eden, and there micht'na hae been ony Fa'."

The late Professor Bruce was asked what Dr. Blank's future was likely to be. The Professor replied, "Blank's future is past."

A lady, speaking to her minister about a somewhat eccentric doctor of the name of Dobie, said the proper spelling of the name was "Dobbie," with two "b's," and asked why the doctor used only one. The minister replied, "He keeps the other 'b' in his bonnet."

Some connoisseur in porridge, who had evidently learned to judge of its quality from the bubbling sound it makes in boiling, said that when it is going to be poor, thin, watery stuff, it says, "Camlachie!

Camlachie!" while if it is to be thick substantial porridge, it bubbles "Carmunnock! Carmunnock!"

An English gentleman with a family of boys had settled in Scotland, where his neighbour had also a family of boys. One day he said to his Scottish neighbour, "How is it that your children are so plump and rosy? We give our boys four meals a day, with meat every time; and yet see how thin and pale they are compared with yours. What do you give yours?" "One meal a day," said his neighbour. "Only one! you astonish me? When do you give that meal?" "It begins in the morning when they get up," replied the neighbour, "and it goes on pretty much all day, till it is time for them to go to bed."

A young minister was settled in a country charge, where his house was a long way from the church. He was fond of horses, and not only drove about the district *tandem* fashion during the week, but shocked some of his conservative people by driving *tandem* also to and from church on Sunday. One of his elders went into the vestry at the close of the service on Sunday to remonstrate with him.

"Why!" said the minister, "what is there wrong in driving them tandem more than in driving them abreast?"

"It disna look weel on the Sabbath," replied the elder.

"Look! what about the 'look'?" said the minister. "It's a mere matter of taste."

"But," persisted the elder, "there's something even in the look o' a thing. Now, when ye're gi'ein' the benediction, ye haud up your hands *so*"—and the elder imitated the minister's gesture with outspread and uplifted hands. "But suppose ye put your thoomb to your nose, and spread oot your hands tandem fashion in front—this way—wad there no' be a guid deal in the 'look' o' that?"

The minister laughed heartily, and admitted that this put the matter in a new light.

Professor Aytoun married one of Christopher North's daughters. When he proposed marriage to her, she modestly indicated her assent, but said she would have to ascertain if her father was agreeable. "Christopher" was very busy in his study, where he did not like to be interrupted. When his daughter came in to lay Professor Aytoun's proposal before him, he said nothing, but promptly scribbled something on a scrap of paper, pinned it on her dress, and sent her back. On her going to Aytoun, he found the inscription on the scrap to be, "With the author's compliments."

The late Professor John Stuart Blackie—sufficiently known to Scottish people all the world over simply as "Blackie"—was one of the most characteristic Scots of this generation, and was full of sparkling wit, wisdom, learning, poetry, patriotism, and kindliest good-humour and charity. His very manner and picturesque appearance, as he stepped briskly along with his plaid over his shoulder, his

"kail-runt" grasped in his hand, his soft hat, his sparkling face, and with his white hair waving in the breeze, attracted every eye, and gave the impression of striking originality and brave energetic life, overflowing with cheerfulness. He was the most unconventional being alive, and was as joyfully free with the loftiest as with the lowliest. When visiting the Marquis of Lorne, the report went abroad that he clapped the Princess Louise on the shoulder and called her a "bonnie lassie." Almost everybody has heard the story of his announcement on the notice-board to the students—"Professor Blackie will meet his classes on Tuesday," and how one of the students by way of a joke, and with an eye to the Professor's romantic admiration of female beauty, deleted the "c" in "classes," making it read "will meet his lasses." And how the Professor, when he stepped up, in passing, to ascertain what the students were laughing at, deleted also the "l," making it now read "will meet his asses"—turning the laugh the other way.

No man could put a point more pithily. Here was his definition of Utilitarianism:—"The greatest happiness of the greatest number. The greatest number, Number One."

A pious Christian lady in Edinburgh, who was a warm admirer of the Professor, notwithstanding his heterodox notions, sent him the present of a cheese, with a copy of Sankey's Hymns laid carefully on the top. Blackie's acknowledgment was character-

istic:—"Blessed is she who hath done what she could to make a lean man fat and a bad one good. For the body, cheese; for the soul, Sankey; for both, thank'ee."

Such are some specimens of the humour that abounds in Scotland. Humour has sometimes been spoken of as a "saving grace." It is so everywhere, and in more senses than one. It belongs for the most part to the kindlier side of human nature, gives innocent pleasure, and promotes fraternity of feeling. And just as, at a social gathering, it provides something that every one can enjoy, and brings all the members of the company into heartier fellowship; so national humour—Scottish, English, Irish, American, or any other—becomes, through the press, international, establishes between all the nations a pleasant bond of sympathy, and helps in this way to promote the brotherhood of all mankind.

HIGHLAND HUMOUR

HIGHLAND HUMOUR

THE Highlander in history has been more associated with strokes of the claymore than with strokes of wit. And though as a Celt, he is akin to the Irish, it is curious to observe the great difference between the two peoples as regards wit and humour. While the Highlander is "a gentleman by nature," and, like the Irishman, conspicuous for his courtesy, he shows even these qualities in a different way. There is much about him of the solemnity of his mountains; and while the Irishman can scarcely help being witty, even when speaking of things sacred, the Highlander's religion almost always moves under the shadow of Sinai, and his sacred music is like the wail of a coronach. When a Highlander fresh from Skye was taken by a friend in Glasgow to hear one of the great city divines, and was asked on leaving the church what he thought of him, he shook his head gravely, "I didna like him at all—at all. Did you no' hear how he said 'Godd' instead of 'Gawd'? No; there's no unction in that man—none whatever." The remark was thoroughly characteristic.

But the Highlander is not without a humour of his own, sometimes sufficiently grim; while many of

his ways and notions and forms of expression are amusing enough to others.

Perhaps the grimmest case of Highland humour on record – though its humour was not its main feature, and only gleams out luridly in the ghastly *dénouement* – was that of Alan Macpherson, who, along with several other soldiers belonging to the Montgomery Highlanders engaged in the frontier war in Canada in 1757, fell into an ambush and was captured by the Indians. In due time the horrible process began of putting the captives to death by slow torture, the "pale-faces" being taken one at a time, and the others having to look helplessly on, awaiting their own turn. When Macpherson's turn came, he made signs that he had something important to communicate. An interpreter having been found, Macpherson stated that if a little time were granted him before he was put to death, he would communicate the secret of an extraordinary medicine which, if applied to the skin, would cause it to resist for several hours the strongest blow of sword or tomahawk. He said that if they would send him a few steps into the wood, with a guard, to collect the plants proper for this medicine, he would prepare it and allow the experiment to be tried on his own neck by the strongest and most expert warrior amongst them. His statement excited the wonder and keen curiosity of the Indians, and the Highlander's request was immediately granted. He was sent with a guard into the woods, and soon returned

with such herbs as he chose to pick up. Having boiled these herbs, he rubbed his neck vigorously all round several times with the juice. He then laid his head on a block of wood, and told the strongest man amongst them to take his tomahawk and strike as hard as he liked, and he would find that he could not make the smallest impression.

One of the most powerful of the Indians was selected for the task; who, levelling a blow with all his might, cut with such force that the head flew off to the distance of several yards.

There was a moment's pause, and then the Indians' eyes were opened. They looked at one another in blank amazement at their own credulity, and the clever way in which their prisoner had hoaxed them and escaped the lingering death prepared for him. Instead, however, of being enraged at his having slipped so easily through their fingers, they were so struck with admiration at his ingenuity and resource, that, by way of testifying to it, they exempted the remaining prisoners from further cruelty.

Different in complexion, but also with a ghastly touch of humour about it, is the story of a huge Highland sergeant belonging to the British forces engaged last century in the war against Napoleon in Egypt. A French soldier fell suddenly into the hands of this huge Highlander, and seeing no hope of escape, threw up his arms and cried, "Quarter! quarter!"—the only English word, perhaps, with which he was acquainted. The Highland sergeant,

infuriated by the havoc that had been made amongst his own comrades and friends, exclaimed, "Quarter? she'll no have time to quarter you, but she'll cut you in twa," and suiting the action to the word, severed his enemy's head from his body with one stroke of his sword.

Quainter and much more pleasant is the story of the Highland piper who, passing through a dense forest, sat down on a stone to take his supper. Some hungry wolves, prowling about for food, drew ominously near him. To keep them away, he threw them pieces of his food, which they greedily devoured. When he had no more left, and feared that he would now himself fall a prey to them, he in despair took up his pipes and began to play. The wolves, terrified by the loud skirling noise, turned tail and fled precipitately.

"Dod!" said the piper, "gin I had kent that ye likit the pipes sae weel, I'd a gien ye a tune afore the supper!"

Another story is told of two Highlanders who found a litter of young pigs in a cave, and arranged to kill and carry them off when the big wild sow was out of the way. At last the opportune moment arrived, and Dugal crept in by the low and narrow aperture through which alone either person or light could enter, and began his work, while Donald kept watch outside. To his horror, before he had been many minutes watching, he heard a noise in the wood, and, behold, the wild sow tearing through

the undergrowth and making straight for the cave. Just when it reached the narrow entrance and was passing through, Donald sprang forward, clutched the tail, twisted it round his hands, and held on like grim death. When the sow struggled to get in, Donald pulled back. When it tried to back out, Donald with all his might pressed it forward. Meantime Dugal had found himself suddenly in the dark, and, unaware of the cause and the terrible crisis that had come, shouted, "Donal! hey Donal! what's keepin' out the light?" to whom Donald, when he had breath enough, cried, "If the tail preaks, you'll find that."

Some of the stories that survive from the time of the Highland rebellions have a dash of humour. The following was a toast composed by a fiery old Highland lady for the celebration of the birthday (10th June) of "the Old Pretender":—

> "Here's to him that's oot,
> And no' to him that's pit him oot;
> And deil turn a' their insides oot
> That disna drink this toast aboot."

A story is also told of a Jacobite landowner who was requested to allow a stone to be quarried on his estate for a monument to Sir Robert Munro, of Foulis, an officer of the Royal army who fell at Falkirk. On being remonstrated with by some Jacobite friends for making this concession, he said, "It's a pleasure. I wish they were askin' headstanes for them a'."

After the battle of Preston, two Highlanders returning through Midlothian, entered the farmhouse of Swanston, where they found no one at home but an old woman. They immediately began to search the house, and finding a web of homespun cloth, made no scruple about unrolling it, and cutting off as much as they thought would make a coat to each. The old woman raged at them in vain, and at last warned them of what they were laying up for themselves.

"Ye thievin' scoondrels," she cried, "ye'll hae to accoont for this yet, ye will!"

"And when will we pe account for't?" asked one of the Highlanders.

"At the last day, you villains," she cried.

"The last day, wumman!" replied the man. "That's gey lang credit. She was only tookin' a coat; but faith, if the credit's so lang, she'll tak' a waistcoat too." Which he did.

After the battle of Prestonpans, a wild mountaineer was stripping the body of a dead officer, when a comrade came up and begged a share of the plunder. "Na, na," said Donald, "you can kill a shentleman for yoursel'."

A story is told of Rob Roy that brings out with ludicrous effect the difference between the famous cateran's view of life and the view taken by the city man and the man of science. When Rob was sent by the Earl of Mar to Aberdeen to raise a part of the persecuted clan that had settled in that neigh-

bourhood, he unexpectedly found a kinsman in Dr. James Gregory, the well-known professor of medicine in King's College. The professor, not knowing what course things might take, thought it prudent to be on good terms with his cousin Rob, for whom personally he had a warm admiration. Accordingly, Rob was invited to the professor's house, and treated with extraordinary kindness by the whole family. Affected by such a hearty and kinsman-like welcome, Rob, when the day of his departure came, took the professor aside and said with much feeling—

"Cousin, you have been so kind to me that I have been thinking in what way I can show you how I appreciate it. Now, I have fixed on a plan. There's your son Jamie, a stout-spirited lad to be only nine years of age, and you are spoiling him by putting so much book-stuff into his head. I'll take him with me to the hills, and make a man of him."

The professor with difficulty concealed his horror at the idea. He saw that Rob Roy was in earnest, and, being afraid of giving him offence, said, "It's very kind of you, Rob, very kind of you; but it would be a trouble to you—far more trouble than you think. Jamie is a boy difficult to manage. No, no; it would never do."

"Trouble!" interrupted the grateful Highlander, "never mind the trouble. There's nothing I wouldn't do for you. It will be a pleasure."

"But his mother, his mother," said the professor,

seeking another way of escape: "his mother, I'm afraid, would——"

"Oh, I can carry him away without her knowing anything about it," said Rob. And it was quite in his way. In desperation, the professor referred to the boy's health, and said that it would be necessary to defer his apprenticeship on the hills for at least another year, till they saw that his constitution was strong enough for it.

Rob Roy reluctantly yielded the point, and went away leaving a promise that he would come back for the boy again. The boy, who so suddenly escaped becoming the henchman of the famous outlaw, succeeded his father in the Chair of Medicine. When he showed his temper, which was somewhat irritable, his friends used to say, "Ah, Rob Roy would have taken that out of you."

Many of the amusing things told about Highland people derive their humour from the ignorance that used to prevail in the remoter parts of the Highlands as to the facts and conditions of life amongst the people of the south.

After the battle of Killiecrankie, a wild clansman got as his share of the plunder a watch—an article he had never seen before. Though unacquainted with its use, he listened with great interest and amusement to its ticking. But next morning, by which time the watch had run down, it was silent, and the disappointed owner determined to dispo-

of it to the first person who was willing to give anything for it. He soon found a customer, to whom he parted with it for the merest trifle. The purchaser was no sooner away than the Highlander said to one of his clansmen, with a chuckle of amusement and triumph—"He's awa wi' her; and he disna ken that she died last night."

Many years ago, in the early days of the railway, a Highlander with cattle from the wilds of Loch Houm, saw, afar off, and for the first time in his life, a railway train crossing the country and then plunging, with a shriek of its steam whistle, into a tunnel, and vanishing from his sight. On his return home, he described with awe the strange sight he had seen—a monstrous serpent crossing the fields, but, when it saw him, giving the most awful squeal he had ever heard in his life, and hurrying away into a hole in the side of a hill.

There is an old story of a simple Highland lass, who had walked to Glasgow to join her sister in service. On reaching a toll bar on the skirt of the city, she began to rap smartly with her knuckles on the gate. The toll-keeper, amazed at her action, came out to see what she wanted.

"Please, sir, is this Glesca?" she inquired.

"Yes, this is Glasgow."

"Please," said the girl innocently, "is Peggy in?"

A Highland cottar, who had never seen gas, took up his quarters for the night in a small hotel in the city. In the morning, the landlord asked if he had

enjoyed a good night's rest. The man, who looked as if he were sick, replied, "I couldna sleep a wink wi' your abomination of a gas wi' its smell like to knock ye doon."

The landlord said he did not think the gas produced any smell, but if his guest thought it did, he should have put it out or got a servant to do it.

"And did I no' blew it oot mysel'?" replied the man. "But it only made it a great deal more worse than before."

At a time when British money was at a premium in Canada, and one of our sixpences could be exchanged for sevenpence halfpenny in Canadian coppers, a Highlander, who had just arrived from Scotland, landed at Quebec with a friend to have a look at the city, and especially to get his empty snuff-box replenished. Entering a shop, he asked for a halfpenny worth of snuff, and laid a sixpence on the counter. He got the snuff; and sevenpence of change was counted out to him. With a look of pleasant but cautious surprise, he said to the girl behind the counter, "Did you'll give me a ha'penny worth o' snuff?" "Yes." "And this change?—is it all right?" "Yes; all right—sevenpence." The delighted Highlander, on rejoining his companion at the door, exclaimed—"Aw, man, Sandy! this is the country to come till; you'll gie a sixpence, and you'll get a ha'penny worth o' snuff for nothing, and you'll get sevenpence back in change!"

In the days of the famous weather-prophet, Admiral Fitzroy, an Inverness correspondent declared that the fishermen at Portmahomack believed the danger signal to be the cause of the violent storms that had been visiting the coast. "Confound that man Fitzroy!" said one of them, "he's worse nor Stenie Bheag of Tarbat. He has nothing to do but hoist that pig drum of his, and on comes a gale o' wind!"

An amusing story is told of a gallant Highlander, who with his trusty *ferrara* had wrought havoc in the enemy's ranks at the storming of Quebec. General Townshend, who had witnessed his exploits, saw him, after the victory was won, sit down beside a heap of Frenchmen whom he had slain, wipe the dust and sweat from his brow, and refresh himself with a huge "sneeshin," or pinch, from his Highland snuff mill. On the return of the regiment to this country, the King, who had heard of the incident through Mr. Pitt, expressed a desire to see the brave old Highlander, and, on his being introduced, held out his hand for Malcolm to kiss. Honest Malcolm, unacquainted with the ceremonial of Courts, and thinking that the King was holding out his hand for a pinch, exclaimed, "Here you are, God bless your great Majesty!" and presented his box. The King laughed heartily at the mistake, took a pinch, made Malcolm a lieutenant, and gave him half-pay for life.

This story is suggestive of another belonging to

our own time, of a Highlander who lived not very far from Balmoral, and who sent two exceptionally beautiful collies as a present to Queen Victoria, who knew him well, having often driven past his house, and once or twice stopped to speak to him and his wife. The Queen not only accepted the collies, but told the donor that if he ever found his way to London when she was at Windsor, he was to call and see her. As it happened, he had to go to London soon after; but he knew enough of the surroundings of Royalty to know that there was no hope of getting access to the palace if he went to the gates and asked to see the Queen. So he went and asked for John Brown, whom he knew well, and who had heard what the Queen said to him. John Brown let the Queen know that her Highland friend of the collies was in waiting, and he was told to bring him in. John took care first to post him up in the etiquette that had to be observed; told him not to speak till the Queen spoke to him, and to be sure always to say "your Majesty."

The Highlander was then ushered into the presence of the Queen, who received him kindly, asked about his wife and family, and said some kindly things to him. But when she began to praise the collies, and say what favourites they had become, and how kind it was of him to send them to her, the delighted mountaineer quite forgot his instructions, and exclaimed heartily, "Toots, wumman, what's twa collies atween you and me?"

HIGHLAND HUMOUR

Most of the stories told at the expense of the "Children of the Mist" derive their drollery from the old unfamiliarity of many of the Highland people with the English language, and belong, therefore, to the same category as 'Arry's attempts to talk French when he goe to Paris.

Two Highland watchmen were overheard one night passing a word with one another in the street. "Did you'll see Tonal Ross?" asked one of them. "No," replied the other, who was evidently not friends with Ross at the time; "I didna see Tonal Ross, tirty prute, nor his lantran too."

Three Highland lads called together at a registrar's office in the south side of Glasgow to register a marriage; to whom, as they were slow to mention their business, the clerk said sharply, "Well!"

Angus M'Tavish, the eldest of the three, thereupon began his explanation—"Rory and her was called to swore that Shon M'Nab was a marriage!"

"What do you say?"

Angus repeated the words.

The clerk looked puzzled. "You say M'Nab swore at a marriage. I don't understand you."

"No, no!" explained Shon. "It's *her* that was a marriage, and Angus and Rory will swore."

"Her marriage! Oh, I see. The young lady swore she was married before M'Nab married her."

"What's that you say?" exclaimed Shon indignantly. "Took care what you'll spoke. Flora was

her husband's man's sister-in-law, and was never a marriage since she was porn."

"See here," said the clerk testily: "what is it you want me to do?"

"To be a marriage wi' Flora M'Kay."

"Great Scot! I don't want to be married to Flora M'Kay."

"You! Take care what you'll say. Who wants you?"

The clerk lost all patience. "Call back in an hour," he said, "and see the registrar himself. He speaks Gaelic."

"Weel, if *you* was not spoke Gaelic, what for does he no' leave a man that can understood English," said Angus, as he turned away indignantly with the others.

It is told of a Jura Highlander who had been drafted into the Glasgow police force, and had got his instructions about not allowing people to obstruct the thoroughfare, that he accosted a knot of young men (who had gathered on the pavement) with the words, "My lads, if you'll be going to stand here you'll have to be moving on." The young men began to chaff him, and very speedily roused his temper. He repeated his warning in sterner tones.

"But why?" demanded one of the young men. "Isn't this a free country?"

"This is not ta country at all, you tam sheep's-head," retorted the enraged policeman. "This is one of the largest cities in the town of Glasgow."

There is sometimes about the Highlander a simplicity and an unconsciousness of the odd way in which his thought or language must strike a stranger, that is very amusing. A man who had lost his wife was being consoled with by a friend on the way home from the funeral. "It must be a great loss to you," said the sympathising friend, "for she was a good wife." "Aw, a great loss—a fery great loss," replied Donald: adding in a voice laden with emotion, "and accompanied too with a fery considerable dale of expense!"

Sometimes when roused, and finding difficulty in expressing himself with sufficient readiness in English, the Highlander does his best by turning back his opponent's words upon him. A Highlander was passing a farmer's stackyard when a dog rushed at him barking furiously, and at last making a dash, fastened his teeth in the Highlander's bare and brawny leg. A hayfork happened to be at hand, and Donald, snatching it up, transfixed the snarling dog to the ground with one thrust. The farmer called out furiously, "You stupid ass! why didn't you take the other end of the fork to the dog?" To which Donald replied with equal fury, "You stupid ass yourself! why did the dog no' tak' his other end to me?"

A Highland boatman called out to his mate, who was standing pipe in hand and with his back to the wind: "Tugal, hev ye a light?" "Ay," replied Tugal, "I've got a light, but it's oot."

A west country Highlander was describing to some tourists with whom he had got into conversation in the Oban steamer how clever his brother was in drawing pictures. "He'll just take a bit of chahk about the size of your thoomb's nose," he said, "and he'll draw a man *there*, and he'll draw a horse *here*, and you couldna tell which was which." He could not understand what the tourists saw to laugh at.

One morning, when the 93rd Highlanders were stationed in Ireland, a pugilistic encounter took place between two Irishmen near the barrack gate. A number of the soldiers, half-dressed, ran out to see the fight, on which an officer ordered an old Highland sergeant to go out and call them back. The sergeant, who had been shocked at conduct which he regarded as beneath the dignity of soldiers, called out in a loud voice, "Oh, mans, mans, but I'll wonder at you wi' a much surprise. You tat's seen sowsands and sowsands skillin' an' aslewin', are ye not ashame to rin oot in your naked podies to see twa mans fechtin'?"

Many years ago, after Scott's *Lady of the Lake* had been published, a traveller met, on Ben Lomond, an old Highlander who had been a guide from the north side of the mountain for forty years; "but that deevil of a Walter Scott, that everybody makes such a wark about" (he exclaimed with vehemence), "I wish I had him to ferry over Loch Lomond. I'd sink the boat wi' him, if I drooned mysel' into the

bargain. Ever since he wrote that *Lady of the Lake*, as they call it, everybody goes away to see that hole of a Loch Katrine, and goes roond by Luss, and I've only had two shentlemen to guide all this blessed season. The deil confoond his ladies and his lakes too, say I!"

It is sometimes very amusing to hear Donald vindicating his own sagacity.

Dougal. "Did you hear them say that Erchie Grant was deid?"

Tonal. "Gosh bless me, no. But I was aye sure that man would dee anyway, some time or other."

Dougal. "But I was just hearin' that he's no' deid efter all."

Tonal. "Aw, it's just like him. I was sure that would be the way o't."

The Highlander, when still unfamiliar with English, is much given to the confusion of his genders, calling everything "he" except his wife and his cat, and these he sometimes calls "hims." His synonyms also get mixed up at times. Robert Ford, in his delightful *Thistledown*, tells of a Highlander, Donald Roy M'Vean, who, when interrogated with regard to his rather scant potato crop, replied, to the amusement of his questioner, "They are just tery goot, indeed, but tery *seldom* whatdefer."

Dr. Kirkwood, of Troon, told me of a Highland friend who amused him immensely by his constant confounding of the word "idiot" with "idiom." He was loud in praise of the Gaelic, and declared

that there was no language like it for the Scriptures. Its great point of superiority was, he said, that there were so many idiots in it. It was full of idiots. He reiterated this again and again with great emphasis, making it difficult for the listeners to maintain their gravity.

While, however, both Gaelic "idiots" and English "idiots" are good in their own place, the confusion of the two yields many funny results. A Highland minister, in announcing a special collection for the following Sunday, said that there would be both a service in English and a service in Gaelic, "so that every one (he said) would have an opportunity of contributing in his own language."

Sometimes a ludicrous turn, altogether unintentional, is given to a sentence by the practice—common amongst Highlanders accustomed to think and speak in Gaelic—of interjecting the word "he" or "she" where the English does not require it—as "the man, he's just away." A Highland minister was visiting a brother minister in the south, and was asked by him on the Sunday to take the afternoon service for him. The Highland minister earnestly declined, on the ground that he was unaccustomed to preach in English, and might blunder. His friend, however, would take no refusal. The text taken in the afternoon was from 1 Peter, v. 8: "The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." The Highland minister said he would divide the subject into three heads:—*First*,

Who the devil he was; *second*, Where the devil he was going; and *third*, What the devil he was roaring for." The effect of this announcement upon the congregation, and upon his friend the minister of the church, may be conjectured.

If English people get amusement out of the mistakes of the Highlanders, the Highland folk, in their turn, get a good deal of amusement out of the English—their ignorance of the country, their efforts to assume or adapt themselves to Highland ways, and their ludicrous attempts to pronounce Gaelic names.

An English lady tourist on the Oban and Callander railway, who had been studying her guide-book and trying to identify places on the route, asked a young woman who had come in at Tyndrum if they were near "Losh-a-wee." The young woman replied that there was no such place in the district that she had ever heard of. The tourist showed her the name in her guide book. It turned out to be "Lochawe."

In a recent English novel, a Scottish Highlander is described as sitting on the roadside singing a Jacobite song, and accompanying himself on the bagpipes. This feat is scarcely as yet possible with the Highland pipes—except in a novel!

Some years since, the hillsmen in Glen Urquhart had much quiet merriment over the attire of the solemn English clergyman, who, along with his clerical collar and his clerical coat reaching to his heels, wore a Glengarry bonnet stuck jauntily on his head, with a sprig of heather in it.

Sometimes a prosperous English merchant or stockbroker rents a shooting in the Highlands, where he appears in full Highland costume, and is highly elated if he is regarded, or if any one professes to regard him, as a genuine Highland chief—though the complexion of his legs generally betrays the fact that they are not accustomed to so much ventilation.

Though, as has been already suggested, the Highlanders are not gifted with the same quickness of wit as the Irish, they are not without the power of making, at times, a smart rejoinder. In the days of the Rebellion, a Highland lady, whose husband was acting as deputy-keeper of Linlithgow Palace, remonstrated with General Hawley, who shortly before had been routed at Falkirk, on the danger likely to result from the large fires kindled by his men in the immediate vicinity of the Palace. The General rudely answered that he did not care though the Palace was burned to the ground. "An' that be the case," responded the indignant lady, "I can rin awa' frae fire as fast as yoursel'!"

Nearly a hundred years ago there was a Laird of Coubie who, whatever good qualities he had, could not number amongst them that of honesty. He was, indeed, notorious for the want of it. In the same district lived the Highland lady of Ess-a-Chaistril, who was distinguished both for her probity and benevolence, but was sadly lacking in good looks. On one occasion when the Laird of Coubie was (as often happened) one of the guests at a dinner-party

in the house, he rose, after several toasts had been drunk, and said he would propose another, for which he would ask the guests to fill their glasses. He then, with a twinkle in his eye implying that he was going to propose something witty, said, turning to the hostess, "I propose the old Scottish toast, 'Honest men and bonnie lasses,'" and, bowing to the hostess, resumed his seat. The lady returned his bow with her usual amiable smile, and taking up her glass, replied, "Weel, Combie, I am sure we may both of us drink that, for it will neither apply to you nor to me."

A Highland drover was returning from a cattle-market in England, where he had been over-reached, a circumstance that deepened for the time his hereditary dislike to the English. When passing through Carlisle, he observed a public notice that £50 would be given to any one who would officiate as executioner in the case of a criminal lying at the time under sentence of death. He at once volunteered, got the rogue hanged, and pocketed his fee. As he moved off, he was hooted and gibed at by the crowd as a beggarly Scot, who for money had done what no Englishman had stooped to do. "Gie me the same siller for each," cried the drover, with a grin, "and I'll be gled to hang ye a'."

The parish minister of Monquhitter, who was noted for his bombastic and grandiloquent style of preaching, met (one day) a Highland piper to whom he was well known; and, in a bantering tone, called

out to him, "Well, piper, how does your wind pay?" To which the piper, bowing to the minister with true Highland courtesy, replied, "Your Reverence has the advantage of me there!"

In the next case a minister had the best of it. He went to entreat the commander of a regiment at Fort George to pardon a poor fellow who, under doubtful circumstances, had been sentenced to death. The officer, who was given to making fun of ministers and of religion, said he would pardon the culprit on one condition, namely – that the minister would, in regular form, baptize his puppy. The minister remonstrated, but at last (to save the doomed man's life) he agreed. The officer thereupon invited a party to the christening, to have some sport over it. The minister took his place, and desired the officer to hold up the puppy. "As I am a minister of the Church of Scotland," he said, "I must proceed in the usual order." The major said that was what he wanted. "Well, then," said the minister, "I begin with the usual question: *Do you acknowledge yourself to be the father of this puppy?*" The company roared, but it was at the major, who found himself caught in his own trap. He had, however, a keen sense of humour, took the joke in good part, threw the puppy aside, pardoned the soldier, and good-naturedly acknowledged himself beaten with his own weapons, and asked the minister to wait and have dinner with the company.

A Highland lady, the wife of a University pro-

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"Well, piper, how does your wind pay?" "Your Reverence has the advantage of me there!"—*Page 206*

fessor, had seen things in her early experience that led her to have an intense dislike to anything that savoured of cant. With many people in those days it was common—as it still is in some parts of the Highlands—to add to any promise the pious reservation, "If I am spared." This lady having invited a gentleman to dine at the house on a certain day, he said he would be glad to come—if he was spared. "Very good," said the lady; "if you are dead, we shall not look for you."

At an officer's supper party, when the table was cleared and the decanters began to go round, a sprightly young cockney officer got up and said, in a bantering tone, "Gentlemen, I must confess a failing of mine. When I take a glass too much, I have a way of abusing the Scotch; but I daresay no one will take offence." He had hardly sat down, when a burly Highland officer rose at the other end of the table and said, "Gentlemen, I have my failings also. When I have had a glass too much, and hear any one abusing Scotland, I have a way of taking him by the cuff of the neck and throwing him out at the window; but I hope no one will take offence." A merry evening was spent, but the young Englishman seemed not to have been tempted to take a glass too much—at anyrate, Scotland came in for no abuse that night.

In 1897, during the occupation of Crete by the Allies, some gentlemen—one of them a retired Highland officer—had been discussing the situation

at a club in London, and were examining a large map of Crete issued by one of the newspapers.

"Let me see," said one of the London gentlemen, directing attention to one point, "this is where the English troops are."

"No," said the officer, "there are no English troops there. There are the Seaforth Highlanders."

"Oh, of course," said the other, "that's what I mean when I say 'English'—I count in the Scotch, of course."

"But what comes, in that case, of you Irish?" asked the officer.

"Irish!" exclaimed the gentleman. "Who is Irish? We are not Irish: we're English."

"What's the difference?" said the officer with a smile. "If you call the Scotch 'English,' why should you English not be called Irish? Surely," he added seriously, "when we have Scottish, English, Welsh, and Irish regiments, they should be so distinguished except when they are regarded as Imperial troops, and then they should be called by the Imperial term, 'British,' the term that includes, and conserves the honour of, them all."

The officer's hint was as well received as it was wise.

A party of English tourists coming upon an old shepherd sitting on the hill-top, thought to have a little fun at his expense, and, as the day was very misty, asked him if he was sitting there enjoying the scenery.

"I suppose, old man," said one, "you see a great distance from this on a clear day."

"Oh yes, shentlemen, a great distance indeed, just as you say."

"I suppose now, on a clear day," said another, "you could see as far as to London."

"Oo ay," replied the shepherd, "and farther than London."

"Quite to America and Madagascar, I should think," said another, with a wink to his companions.

"Ay, to be surely, and farther too."

"Farther than America! Well, now, old man, tell us how far you can see."

"Weel, if the nicht is clear, shentlemen, you will see from this ahl the way to the moon!"

The tourists had met their match, and did not pursue their enquiries further along that line.

A story is told of "Highland Sandy," an old piper of the 92nd. When the detachment to which he piped was located in Ireland, an order was given that "Boyne Water" was not to be played. "Boyne Water," however, was one of Sandy's favourite tunes, and, to the surprise of the community, the first time the company marched out after the prohibition was issued, Sandy struck up the forbidden air. "What do you mean?" cried the officer. "Do you know that you are not allowed to play 'Boyne Water'?" "It'll no pe 'Boyne Water' at all," replied Sandy, "it'll be quite another tune to the same air."

Many years ago, two Highland gentlemen—warm personal friends—were yet rival claimants for the recognised chieftainship of the clan Macnab. One of them was settled in Canada. The other, when on a visit to the colony, was waited on by his rival, who left a large card, inscribed—

THE Macnab.

Next day the visit was returned, and a card twice the size of the former was left, bearing the inscription—

The OTHER Macnab.

Another chief of the same clan (Francis Macnab of Macnab) was a fine Highland gentleman, proficient in many things, but deficient in his spelling. He was writing out a certificate on behalf of a friend, with a very badly mended quill, when his friend ventured to point out that several of the words had been misspelt. To which he replied, as he held out the quill, "Wha could spell wi' a pen like that?"

An old Highland crofter was passenger on the deep sea steamer going round the Mull of Kintyre

in a wild storm. He was hanging over the gunwale, dead sick and groaning. Another passenger, exempt from the malady, made his way to the gunwale to comfort him. "Never mind, my man; never mind," he said cheerily; "you'll be all the better after it." To whom the old crofter answered with a groan, "I was weel eneuch afore." He had needed no such process to make him any better.

The late Dr. Norman Macleod was once a passenger in a rowing boat on a Highland loch in wild weather, along with a well-known ministerial brother who was as conspicuous for his weak and puny appearance as Dr. Norman was for his gigantic size and strength. The storm increased in fury, till it seemed as if the waves would overwhelm them. The "little minister" became visibly alarmed; and, fearing that death to them all was imminent, proposed that his herculean brother should engage in prayer, a proposal which the two female passengers earnestly supported. "Na, na!" cried the nearly exhausted boatman, who had evidently strong views of the connection of works with faith, "let the wee man pray; but the big one maun tak' an oar, if ye dinna want to be drooned."

Neil Gow, the famous violinist, was a native of Inver, near Dunkeld, where he continued to reside under the patronage of the Duke of Atholl, his hereditary chief. Though Gow was often present at the most refined gatherings of his day, he retained the native simplicity and homeliness of his speech

and manners, which were not only tolerated but enjoyed by his patrons. One day he was summoned to Dunkeld House to listen to the piano-playing of Lady Charlotte Drummond, one of the Duke's daughters, who had just finished her education. After hearing her play, Neil remarked cheerfully to the Duchess, "That lassie o' yours, my leddy, has a gude ear." "Neil," said one of the gentlemen present, in a tone of surprise, "do you call her Grace's daughter a lassie?" "What would I ca' her?" answered the minstrel; "she's no' a laddie!"

The Duke made himself very familiar with Gow. Walking with the Duchess one day on Stanley Hill, near Dunkeld, Neil chanced to come up. The Duke, who was in a merry mood, took hold of him and sportively engaged him in a wrestling match. Neil was a stalwart fellow, but he got the worst of it, and, missing his footing, rolled down the hill. The Duchess hurried down to him, and expressed the hope that he was not hurt. "Naething to speak o'," replied Neil; "I was the mair idiot to wrestle wi' sic a fule."

Gow's weakness was his fondness for his glass—often a glass out of the second bottle! It was long before he bid his "farewell to whisky." The celebrated Duchess of Gordon, on one occasion, paid Neil a visit in his cottage. In the course of talk, her Grace complained to him of suffering from giddiness and swimming in her head. "I ken the complaint well," said the fiddler. "When I've been

a wee fou the nicht afore, I've thocht as if a bike o' bees was bizzin' in my head the next morning."

Sometimes the humour of the Highlander takes satiric form. A wealthy Lowland merchant, whom we shall call Meekin—though that was not his real name—and who had erected a chapel, known as "Meekin's Memorial Church," to the memory of his wife, took shootings in the Highlands, and one day by accident fired some of his shot into his Highland ghillie, wholly depriving him of the sight of one eye. It was thought that, being wealthy, he would do something handsome for the poor ghillie; but all he did was to take him south and send him home with a glass eye in place of the eye that had been destroyed. The dwellers in the glen were keenly interested, not to say amused, at the ghillie's glass eye, which came to be known amongst them as "Meekin's Memorial Window."

Sometimes the satire might pass for innocence. An English prelate was visiting friends who had taken shootings in the Highlands, and was wearing his usual knickerbockers and silk stockings. One day he took the opportunity, when walking through the village at the foot of the glen, to step into the little post-office and ask if any letters had come for him.

"And wha may ye be?" asked the postmaster.

"The Bishop of H——," replied the prelate.

"Ay!" exclaimed the postmaster, looking admiringly at him, "and you're really a bishop! Weel, I

just thocht there was something distinguished aboot yer legs."

The Highlanders were long noted for their strict observance of the Sabbath. On one occasion, a professor of geology who was spending a holiday in Ross-shire, was rambling along the road one Sunday afternoon, looking for specimens, and stepping aside now and again to pick up a stone and break it with his little hammer. A venerable white-haired crofter, who was on his way to church, observed him as he was passing, stopped for a moment, and said solemnly, "Shentleman, ye're breakin' mair thi' day than stanes!"

Akin to smartness in rejoinder is smartness and resource in action, as in the following case:—

There was a cobbler well known to most of the St. Andrews students in his day. This cobbler cured his own bacon, of which he had an ample supply hung up in his big, old-fashioned chimney. Three Highland students proposed to have a *gaudeamus* or supper-party before returning to their Highland homes, and it was resolved, for the fun of the thing, to "raid" one of the cobbler's hams for the occasion. When the night came, the one chosen by lot for the purpose descended the cobbler's chimney. He reached the floor safely, and having fastened a ham to his shoulder, proceeded to ascend. Suddenly, however, he lost his hold and fell heavily. The noise awakened and alarmed the sleeping shoemaker, who scrambled hastily out of bed and began to

strike a light. Retreat for the student was now impossible; but he hurriedly blackened his face at the chimney, turned up his coat collar, and drew his head down between his shoulders.

By this time the cobbler had got his tallow dip lighted, and peering at the object before him, said, "What are ye? Whaur cam' ye frae? What want ye here?"

"I come from below," said the student in a hollow voice. "Satan, my master, has sent me to you with the present of this ham."

"I defy the deevil an' a' his warks," cried the affrighted cobbler. "I command ye, in the name o' a' that's gude, begone!"

"Say you 'begone'?" replied sooty-face. "Which way, then? Shall I blow the roof off, or will you light me to the door?"

The trembling cobbler walked backwards towards the door, which he opened, allowing the intruder to depart. Next day he missed one of his hams, but received from some unknown quarter a sum of money more than enough to compensate him for his loss.

Many stories are told of the days of smuggling some of them amusing enough. Campbeltown was a great place for the "illicit traffic," and continued so till comparatively recent times. The practice seemed not to be regarded as discreditable—cheating the Excise not being classed in the same category as cheating a neighbour. Hence, many of the smugglers attended church regularly, and in Camp-

beltown many of them contributed liberally towards the erection of the old Relief Church in Long Row. The Rev. Mr. M'Dougall, a minister of the place in after years, used to say that if they had rendered unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, the "Long" row would have been "gey short."

Dr. Kennedy, in his *Ross-shire Fathers*, tells us that at Loch Carron, where there was also a good deal of smuggling, the minister (Rev. Lachlan Mackenzie) on one occasion urged upon his people the duty of telling the truth under all circumstances, assuring them that it would be found the safest course both for time and for eternity.

One of his hearers, who was a smuggler, could not believe that the rule would hold in his case, and went to speak with the minister on the subject.

"Surely," he said, "if the exciseman should ask me where I hid my whisky, it would not be very wrong to put him off the scent."

Mr. Mackenzie replied that nothing could justify falsehood, and that even in such a case it was best to tell the simple truth.

The smuggler was soon after put to the test.

While working behind his house one morning, the exciseman unexpectedly appeared. "Any whisky about your house to-day?" said the officer.

The smuggler, remembering his minister's advice, but with many misgivings as to the result, said, "Yes, there's three casks of whisky in a hole under my bed."

"Aha, you rascal!" laughed the exciseman, "if they were there you wouldn't be so quick to tell me," and after looking everywhere else walked away.

As soon as he was out of hearing, the smuggler, breathing freely again, exclaimed as he wiped his brow, "Oh, Mr. Lachlan, Mr. Lachlan, you are right after all!"

There are some amusing features about personal names in the Highlands. Nicknames were, and in many places still are, almost universal. I remember when I was a boy at Oban—then a quiet little Highland village—we had all our nicknames. Sometimes a boy's nickname was familiar to us all, when few, perhaps, could have told his real name. Even now, after the lapse of fifty years, when some old schoolmate is spoken of whom I cannot recall by his proper name, the mention of his nickname has sometimes brought him to mind at once.

My own nickname, as a left handed boy, was "Diabhidh ciotach": happily distinguishing me from another of the same name who was called "Diabhidh gorach" (Daft Davie). Another boy was known as "Sandy Eireanach" (Irish Sandy); another as "An Riomach" (The Mackerel). Men and women were also known best by their nicknames:—"Baldy Ruiha" (Red Baldy), "Donnachadh nan ubhcan" (Duncan of the Eggs), "Bully Reawur" (The Fat Bully), "An Greusaiche Aguilceach" (The Thumping Shoemaker), "Mary Beag a' bhainne ghoil" (Wee Mary of the Buttermilk).

Sometimes a boy, to be distinguished from others of the same name, was not only a "Mac" (son of So-and-So), but had to carry quite a number of his ancestors on his shoulders. A Kintyre friend told me of a little schoolmate of his who was known as "Uillidh beag Iain Dhonuill Uillidh Pheadair Mhic Chennein" (Little Willie, son of John, of Donald, of William, of Peter M'Kinnon). Other nicknames were less genealogical, and more descriptive: "Donull Bhritidh Mhoir ghlinn eadarda-chnoc" (Donald, son of Big Betty of the Glen between the two hills); "Donull Mhuic-shuileach Iain mor nan trosg" (Pig-eyed Donald, son of big John of the Cods).

The common practice—even in a community of Camerons, or Campbells, or Macdonalds—of giving a child a personal name borne already by scores of others, including the father, grandfather, or uncle on whose account it was given, almost necessitates nicknames, in order to distinguish one person from the many others bearing exactly the same name. I remember, in one of the Highland settlements in Canada, where the people were mostly all Macdonalds, hearing of a jury of twelve being impannelled, nine of whom were Macdonalds, and six of these Donald Macdonalds. To distinguish the different Donald Macdonalds in such a community, one had to be called "Big Donald," another "Little Donald," another "Black Donald," another "Fair Donald" another "Red Donald." Others had to be distin

guished by their wives' names, as "Flora's Donald," "Peggy's Donald," and so on.

Many are the stories told of the Highlanders' pride in their language, their music, their poetry, the antiquity of their own clan, and the achievements of their ancestors, and their own dislike or contempt for things English. They have even been known to draw a distinction in courts of law between the binding character of their own form of taking the oath, and the form prevailing on the English side of the border. Even when secretly intending to give false evidence in order to clear a friend, the Highlander would sometimes, without the least hesitation, take the English form of oath by kissing the book.

At Carlisle Assizes, a Highlander who had taken the oath in this form swore positively that his friend at the bar had been in Crieff on the day when he was charged with having stolen a horse in England. The prosecutor, who had lived in the Highlands, and guessed that Donald was attaching no value to the English form of oath-taking, requested that the questions be put again, but that the witness should first have the oath administered to him in the Highland fashion. But Donald refused to take it. "Na, na," he said, "there's a hantle o' difference betwixt blawing on a book and damnin' one's soul."

The Highlander's pride in his ancestors, and the tenacity with which he maintained the antiquity and greatness of his own particular clan, sometimes comes out in an amusing form. The story is told of

a Campbell and a M'Lean who were disputing on this point. Campbell (the name is pronounced "Cammle" in the Highlands) said his clan existed before the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "For," said he, "does the Bible no' say that when Isaac lifted up his eyes, he saw that the camels were coming?" (Gen. xxiv. 63).

"Hoch, man," said the other, "what's that to the M'Leans? The M'Leans are as old as the world itself."

"Do you mean to tell me the M'Leans lived afore the Flood?" exclaimed Campbell.

"To be shure," replied M'Lean, "long before the Flood!"

"But the whole of the people was drooned," said Campbell. "exceptin' the one family that went into Noah's Ark."

"Noah's Ark!" retorted M'Lean contemptuously. "What wad the M'Leans want wi' Noah's Ark. Wha ever heard o' a M'Lean that hadna a boat o' his ain?"

Another story is told at the expense of Maccae of Kintail, that he had the genealogy of his ancient family written out on a long, narrow scroll, near the middle of which there occurred the marginal note: "*About this time the world was created.*"

There was not much of an amusing character about the old clan feuds and combats, but some has been got out of them, occasionally, by the parodist, as in the ballad—

The Massacre of the Macpherson.

Fhairshon swore a feud,
  Against the clan M'Tavish,
Marched into their land
  To murder and to rafish.

For he did resolve
  To extirpate the vipers,
With four-and-twenty men
  And five-and-thirty pipers.

But when he had gone
  Halfway down Strath Canaan,
Of his fighting tail
  Was only three remaining;

They were all he had
  To back him in ta battle;
All the rest had gone
  Off to drive ta cattle.

"Fery coot!" cried Fhairshon,
  "So my clan disgraced is;
Lads, we'll need to fecht
  Pefore we touch ta beasties.

"Here's Mic-Mac-Methuselah
  Comin' wi' his vassals;
Ghillies seventy-three,
  And sixty dhuine-wassals."

"Coot tay to you, sir;
  Are you not ta Fhairshon?
Was you comin' here
  To visit any pershon?

"You are but a plackguard, sir!
  It is now six hundred
Coot long years and more
  Since my glen was plundered."

"Fat is tat you say?
  Dare you cock your beaver?
I will teach you, sir,
  What is coot behaviour.

"You shall not last
  For another day more;
I will shoot you, sir,
  Or stap you with ma claymore."

"I am ferry glad
  To learn what you mention,
Since I can prevent
  Any such intention."

So Mic-Mac-Methuselah
  Gave some warlike howls,
Trew his skian-dhu,
  And stuck it in his powels.

In this ferry way
  Tied the valient Fhairshon,
Who was always thought
  A superior pershon.

HIGHLAND HUMOUR

Fhairshon had a son
  That married Noah's daughter,
And nearly spoil'd ta Flood
  By drinkin' up the water;

Which he would have done,
  I, at least, pelieve it,
Had the mixture been
  Only half Glenlivet.

The old-fashioned Highlander, on the hills or by e shores of his loch, was, and still is, proud of his an, and is apt to look on southern aristocrats, and en Royalties, as what the Yankees call "small tatoes" compared with the head of his own sept. he following dialogue is recorded:—

First Gael (just come ashore from the Herrin' shin').—"Hoo's a' wi' ye, Tonal? Hae ye ony ws?"

Second Gael.—"Na, I hear naethin'. Oo ay, they re sayin' MacCallum More's son's gaun to get rrit."

First Gael.—"Ay, ay: and wha's he gaun to get rrit on?"

Second Gael.—"Ye ken the Queen?"

First Gael.—"Ay, I ken the Queen."

Second Gael.—"Aweel, it's on her young dochter 's goin' to get merrit."

First Gael.—"Weel, weel! Gosh, but the Queen be a prood woman!"

The chief of the clan Macnab was at dinner in a Highland inn, where he expected to be asked to sit at the head of the table. The scion of another clan, however, was also one of the company, and insisted on taking the chair. When some of those present began excitedly to assert the superior right of one or the other, Macnab took another seat, remarking, with cheerful pride, "Gentlemen, sit down where you please. But wherever the Macnab sits, that's the head of the table." It was a happy illustration, not only of Highland pride, but of tact and Highland humour.

The Highlander, though loyal to his chief or to his leader, has a temper of his own, and has a difficulty in pocketing a grudge. On one of the West Highland steamers, one of the deck hands was annoyed by a grim-looking lady, who made him move her luggage for safety from one part of the deck to the other, and a few minutes after to another place, where she thought it would be still more secure. When she called him again, and ordered him to move it a little away from some other luggage that happened to be near, Donald, in his irritation, forgot his good manners so far as to retort, "Hoch! go to Jericho, you and your luggage!"

The indignant lady at once rose and went to the captain to complain. The captain said he would see to it, and after a while got a hold of Donald and told him he must go and apologise to the lady.

It was sorely against his grain, especially when he considered himself the aggrieved party; but the captain's orders must be obeyed.

He went reluctantly to where he saw the indignant lady sitting, and said, "Was you the auld leddy that I told to go to Jericho?"

"I *am* the lady to whom you made that rude remark."

"Weel," said Donald, "the captain tells me to tell you ye needna go."

Many stories are told of the Highlander's weakness for whisky. Happily, both at home and abroad, the Highland people are gradually overcoming this weakness, and recent campaigns have shown that the splendid courage and heroism of our Highland soldiers are as great without drink as with it; while their discipline, endurance, and strength are greater.

But there has, in the past, been too much ground for the common association of the Highlander and his dram.

"I know what sort of heaven you'd pe wantin'," cried a Highland minister, excited at finding that his eloquent picture of heavenly glory had awakened no apparent interest in the listless congregation. "I know what kind of heaven you'd pe wantin'. You'd pe wantin' that all the seas would pe hot water, that all the rivers would pe rivers of whiskies; and that all the hills and the mountains would pe loaves of sugar! That's the sort of heaven you'd pe wantin'. Moreover," he added, warming to his

work, "you'd be wantin' that all the cornstooks would be pipe-staples, and that all the rocks was tobacco, and all the dust of the earth was sneeshin! That's the kind of heaven ye'd pe wantin'."

It is told of another Highland minister that he had occasion to call one of his people before the session to admonish him on account of his drunken habits. "Railly, Hugh," he said, "you must give up this dram-draming. I don't ask you to abstain altogether from the mercies of Gawd. You may take a dram before going out to the hills in the morning, to keep out the cold, and you may take a dram when you come in, to gi'e you an appetite for your brochan. And you may take, perhaps, a dram before going to the hills again, and of course you can take a dram or two eftir dinner, and another at supper, and one before you go to bed. But railly, Hugh, you must gie up *ane* dram-dramin'."

The Highlanders—those at least to whom Gaelic was the language of childhood—are very fond of the ancient tongue. Especially is the Highlander moved by it when he is far from his native hills and hears it unexpectedly. Years ago, when visiting the Highland settlements in North Carolina, I was told of a curious case that occurred at a jury trial in Fayetteville, even when Gaelic was dying out amongst the people. Mr. Banks, the State solicitor, observing that the jury were all Highlanders, addressed them in the language with which they had all been familiar in youth. Not a word of it

intelligible to the judges, but the jury were
nsely delighted, and it seemed certain that Mr.
ks would carry his case. It happened, however,
Mr. Leech, the prisoner's counsel, was a better
lic scholar, and a far more fluent speaker than
Banks, though nobody in court had been aware
. Mr. Leech, to conciliate the judge, began in
lish, and then said that as the State solicitor
been addressing the jury in Gaelic, he would
e permission to follow him in the same language.
first upbraided Mr. Banks for his bad Gaelic,
declared that if he heard one of his own
lren speaking the ancient and noble language
ngrammatically he would take "the tawse" to
He then took up the case, made a magnificent
ch in Gaelic, carried the delighted jury with
and got a unanimous verdict for the prisoner.
is said that there is no language equal to Gaelic
prayer, preaching, or swearing. It certainly is a
uage with infinite capacity for the expression of
ng, and one that by its very copiousness and
bility allures the orator to immeasurable ex-
ion.

aelic sermons and prayers are so conspicuous for
copiousness of illustration and almost ludicrous
icularity of detail, that in many of the queer
es current about them it is not easy always to
nguish where truth terminates and burlesque
ns.

ugh Boyd, in his *Reminiscences of Fifty Years*,

vouches for the following as part of a Highla
minister's homily:—

"Ah, my freends! what causes have we for gra
tude! Oh, yes, for gratitude. Look at the pla
of our habitation. How grateful should we be th
we do not live in the far-away North, amidst t
frost and the snaw and the cauld and the weet; o
no! where there's a lang, lang night for half o' t
year, oh, yes! That we do not depend upon t
aurawry boreawlis, oh, no! That we do not
shiverin' aboot in skins, oh, no! Snookin' amo
the snaw like moodiewarts, oh, no, no! And h
grateful should we be that we do not leeve in t
far-away Sooth, beneath the equawter, where the s
is aye bleezin' hot, oo ay, and ye're burnt black li
a smiddy. Ay, and where there's teegurs and roar
lions, oh, yes! And crocodiles and fearsome bea
growlin' and girnin' at ye among the woods. A
where the very air is like a tever. Oh, grate
should we be that we do not leeve in these plac
oh, no, no! But that we leeve in this blessed isla
of ours call't Great Breeten, and in that favour
part of it named Scotland, that looks up at B
Nevis, oh, yes! Where there's no teegurs r
roarin' lions, oh, no, no!"

Mr. Ford quotes the following family pray
belonging to the clan times:—

"Gracious Providence! Bless all ta Macdona
and ta Macdonald's children, tere sons' sons and t
daughters' daughters for a thousand years lang sy

Be gracious to send us mountains of snuff and tobacco. Oh, yes! and hills of potatoes, and breads and cheeses as big as all ta Howe o' Strathmore. And moreover likewise send us floods of water, tat there may be grass for plenty to man and beest, and some to spare for ta poor of ta parish. Send us guns and pistols as many as the sand on the shore; and swords, too, to kill all the wild Grants and Macphersons for evermore. Bless the wee stirk, and make him a big coo before Martinmas. Bless the wee soo, and make him a big boar likewise. Oh, yes! and put the strength of Samson into Donald's body and arms, and gi'e us kail and corn prodigious. Bless a' the bairns—Duncan and Rory and Flora, and you Donald, and you Lauchie, and the praise shall be Thine. Oo ay, amen."

Every one knows the Highlander's love for the bagpipes. Scott, in one of his novels, gives expression to the wag's idea of the height of a Highlander's happiness, namely:—Twenty-four bagpipe players assembled together in one room, all playing at the same time different tunes. I remember a Campbeltown Highlander, speaking to the banker on the day after a local concert, and referring with pathetic enthusiasm to the fine voice of one of the lady singers, said, "Aw, it was peautiful: it was heavenly; it was just like the bagpipes!"

The Highlanders, however, can appreciate other music beside the bagpipes. A Lochaber man, when in London, was taken on a Sunday to St. Paul's. On

his return, the friends with whom he was staying asked him how he liked it. He expressed his appreciation with great unction. "Indeed," he added, "it was more like heaven than earth. But oh, it was an awfu' way o' spendin' the Sah-bath!"

An "Auld Kirk" minister is credited with the following Highland version of "Auld Lang Syne," referring to the pipes, the kilt, and "the Gaelic":—

"Should Gaelic speech be e'er forgot,
And never brocht to min'?
For she'll pe spoke in Paradise
In the days o' auld lang syne.

"When Eve, all fresh in beauty's charms,
First met fond Adam's view,
The first word that he'll spoke to her
Was '*Cia mar a tha thu an duidh?*'

"And Adam, in his garden fair,
Whene'er the day did close,
The dish that he'll to supper teuk
Was always Atholl brose.

"And when wi' Eve he'll had a crack,
He'll teuk his sneeshin-horn,
And on it's top ye'll weel might mark
A braw big Cairngorm.

"When man first fand the want o' claes,
The wind and cauld to fleg,
He twisted round about his waist
The tartan philabeg.

"And music first on earth was heard
In Gaelic accents deep,
When Jubal in his oxter squeezed
The blether o' a sheep.

"Aw, but the pipes is grand, my friends,
The braw bagpipes is fine;
So we'll teuk another pibroch yet
For the days o' auld lang syne."

I remember, many years ago, at Stornoway Castle, where Sir James Matheson kept up the ancient custom of having the piper go round the table when the cloth was being removed, a little Frenchman sat opposite me, who, when he heard that the piper would presently appear, spread out his hands in rapture, declaring that Scotch music was so beautiful—"so totching, so patetic." When the door at length opened from the hall outside, and the pipe music swept in like a tempest, I could see that the little Frenchman's nerves were getting a shock. The piper marched proudly, with his screaming pipes, round the long table, and passed in due course immediately behind Monsieur's chair, at which moment the little Frenchman's expression made me think of a man trying to preserve a bright and cheerful expression of countenance while getting one of his molar teeth drawn. As soon, however, as the piper was gone and there was no danger of his return, Monsieur remarked, with a less

confident but with a more tranquillised expression, that it was "ver' beautiful!"

Sydney Smith had evidently no soul for the pipes. He refused to admit the propriety even of the expression "playing" on the bagpipes. He said you might as well speak of "playing" on an iron foundry. Leigh Hunt was of the same mind. To be tied to a stake within a hundred yards of a stout-lunged piper was his idea of martyrdom. But even the English people are coming to understand the bagpipes better; and while the Highlander is often joked about his delight in their music, it has to be remembered that if the piano and the violin are better adapted to the drawing-room, it was with the martial strains of the bagpipes in their ears that Wolfe's Highlanders stormed the heights of Abraham and the gallant Gordons the heights of Dargai. It is to the same shrill and soul-stirring music that Highland regiments have marched to achieve renown, not only for themselves, but for the British name and the British Empire, in every quarter of the globe.

ENGLISH HUMOUR

ENGLISH HUMOUR

HUMOUR, national or provincial, depends a good deal for its character and appreciation on what the people are familiar with. As J. L. Toole says, the Cockney is amused by Ally Sloper, who is a mere idiot to the Northman, because the Cockney is familiar with persons of whom Sloper is a burlesque type; while the Scotchman shakes his sides over the adventures of Elder Macnab, who to the Cockney is a meaningless and inconceivable bore, because the Cockney cannot understand him, while to the Scotchman the elder suggests a type which is actual and pretty well known to him. With regard, however, to characters and characteristics that belong to common experience, England is apt to take or get credit for much of the humour that belongs to Scotland and Ireland, when it is expressed, as it usually and naturally is, in the language common to all the three kingdoms, and which bears the somewhat misleading name of "English." But making all allowance for this, what a wealth and variety of purely English humour there is! How many wits and humourists England has produced whose names are household words everywhere, and

whose humorous writings or witty sayings are a source of unabating enjoyment.

Shakespeare's tragedies have taken such hold upon the public mind, and his name stands so much for profundity in knowledge of human nature, that his character as a humourist is apt to be less thought of. But "The Taming of the Shrew," with the extravagance of its humour, might almost be called a farce; and what character has given more amusement than Falstaff? Samuel Johnson went the length of declaring that Shakespeare wrote comedy even better than tragedy—that his comedy was more completely instinctive. Starting from Shakespeare, and coming down by way of Dryden, Butler, Swift, Pope, Addison, and Fielding, to Sydney Smith and Charles Dickens, what wealth and variety of humour, satire and wit!

No metrical work of a humorous kind has ever surpassed in its point and pith Samuel Butler's famous burlesque of the English Puritans. What a testimony to its power that, though *Hudibras* was written with special reference to a religious party, and to conditions that have long since passed away, so many of its expressions and descriptions not only survive, but have woven themselves into the language of literature; and that so many of his witty descriptions are still familiar as ever.

Who can forget his description of those who

> "Compound for sins they are inclined to
> By damning those they have no mind to;"

or his description of Hudibras :

" For he was of that stubborn crew
Of errant saints whom all men knew
To be the true Church militant ;
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun,
Decide all controversy by
Infallible artillery.
And prove their doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks."

And again :

" He could distinguish and divide
A hair 'twixt south and south-west side.
. . . . . .

He'd undertake to prove by force
Of argument, a man's no horse.
. . . . . .

He'd run in debt by disputation,
And pay with ratiocination.
. . . . . .

In mathematics he was greater
Than Tycho Brahe or Erra Pater,
For he by geometric scale
Could take the size of pots of ale,
And tell by sines and tangents straight,
If bread and butter wanted weight."

How well the " Vicar of Bray " could have understood his satire on the relation between faith and salary :

"'What makes all doctrines plain and clear?'
About two hundred pounds a year;
'And that which was proved true before,
Prove false again?' Two hundred more."

How extravagant, and yet how funny, was his description of Holland and the Dutch:

"A country that draws fifty feet of water,
In which men live as in the hold of Nature
They feed, like cannibals, on other fishes,
And serve their cousins-german up in dishes.
A land that rides at anchor, and is moored:
In which men do not live, but go aboard."

A few years after the death of the author of *Hudibras*, there appeared in the field of letters a man with even greater pungency of wit, a writer who has never been surpassed in the fierceness of his personal satire, which fell and fastened upon his victims like Greek fire. Swift was born in Ireland, and passed most of his life there, and perhaps his humour took some of its recklessness from his adopted country, but he was the son of English parents.

His *Tale of a Tub*, written to ridicule the Roman Catholics and Presbyterians, was merciless and gross, but withal irresistably ludicrous. It justified Gilfillan's description of it as the "wildest, wickedest, wealthiest book of its size in British literature."

What ridicule, even in his more playful moods,

he could pour by his wit upon persons whom he disliked. Take, as a specimen, his burlesque of the *Occasional Reflections in Several Subjects*, by the famous Hon. Robert Boyle. These solemn "Reflections," such as "Upon seeing a windmill standing still," "Upon his coach being stopped in a narrow lane," "Upon the taking up of his horses from grass," "Upon my spaniel bringing me my gloves," and so on, were tempting subjects for Swift's mockery. He gives it in his "Reflections upon a Broomstick" as follows:—

"This single stick which you now behold ingloriously lying in that neglected corner I once knew in a flourishing state in a forest. It was full of sap, full of leaves, and full of boughs, and now in vain does the busy art of man pretend to vie with nature, by tying that withered bundle of twigs to its sapless trunk; it is now at best but the reverse of what it was, a tree turned upside down, the branches on the earth, and the root in the air. It is now handled by every dirty wench, condemned to do her drudgery and, by a capricious kind of fate, destined to make other things clean and be nasty itself; at length worn out to the stumps in service of the maids, it is either thrown out of doors, or condemned to the last use of kindling a fire. When I beheld this, I sighed and said within myself, Surely mortal man is a broomstick! Nature sent him into the world strong and lusty, in a thriving condition,

wearing his own hair on his head, the proper branches of this reasoning vegetable, until the axe of intemperance has lopped off his green boughs, and left him a withered trunk : he then flies to art, and puts on a periwig, valuing himself upon an unnatural bundle of hairs all covered with powder that never grew on his head. But now, should this our broomstick pretend to enter the scene proud of those birchen spoils it never bore and all covered with dust, the sweepings though it be of the finest lady's chamber, we should be apt to ridicule and despise its vanity. Partial judges that we are of our own excellencies and other men's defaults!

"But a broomstick, perhaps you will say, is an emblem of a tree standing on its head. And pray what is man but a topsy-turvy creature, his animal faculties perpetually mounted on his rational- his head where his heels should be, grovelling on the earth! And yet with all his faults he sets up to be a universal reformer and corrector of abuses, a remover of grievances, rakes into every slut's corner of nature, bringing hidden corruptions to the light, and raises a mighty dust where there was none before, sharing deeply all the while in the very same pollutions he pretends to sweep away. His last days are spent in slavery to women, and generally the least deserving; till worn to the stumps like his brother besom, he is either kicked out of doors, or made use of to kindle flames for others to warm themselves by."

From Swift's books and conversations, multitudes of witty and pungent sayings could be gathered. Here are a few :—

"The reason why so few marriages are happy, is because young ladies spend their time in making nets, not in making cages."

"Churches are dormitories for the living as well as for the dead."

"Religion seems to have grown childish with age, and requires miracles to nurse it, as it had in its infancy."

"In disputes, as in armies, the weaker sets up false lights, and makes a great noise, to make the enemy believe them more numerous than they really are."

"Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through."

Referring to the tendency to magnify small local concerns, he said : "Half a dozen fools are prating in a coffee-house, and presently think their own noise about their ears is made by the world."

Of critics he said : "They are at best but the drones of the learned world, who devour the honey, and will not work themselves; and a writer need no more regard them than the moon does the barking of a little senseless cur." This remark may apply to *some* writers, and may be deserved by *some* critics.

Swift, fierce as he was with his pen, was a favourite in society, and was not without amiable qualities. Amongst these was kindness to his servants. Even when he had to rebuke them, he did so in a comical way that took away the sting, while making it more certain to be remembered. At dinner in the Deanery one evening, a joint had been overdone. He told the butler to call the cook, who presently appeared in the dining-room trembling. "Sweetheart," said Swift," take this mutton to the kitchen, and do it less." In utter amazement, she said, "Sir, that is impossible." "Then for the future," said the Dean, "if you must commit faults, commit faults that can be mended."

Old Samuel Johnson, though so pompous and stately in his writings, had a good deal of humour in his composition, which came out in talk. Some of the stories told of him, and some of his recorded sayings, are as characteristic of the man as they are illustrative of his shrewdness and wit.

He said of Dr. Sheridan's son Tom, who was an actor, "Sir, Sherry is dull—naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity, sir, is not in nature."

That was a happy saying of his when he compared politeness to an air-cushion:—"There is nothing in it," he said, "but it wonderfully eases the jolts of life."

At a concert where a celebrated violinist was giving an extraordinary performance, to which Johnson was evidently quite indifferent, a musical friend, to quicken his interest, told him how extremely difficult the piece was. "Difficult!" replied the doctor, "I wish it were impossible!"

Speaking of wine-drinking, Johnson once said: "Wine makes a man better pleased with himself. I do not say that it makes him more pleasing to others. Sometimes it does. But the danger is that while a man grows better pleased with himself, he may be growing less pleasing to others."

He did not understand the Scotch, but he could sometimes say a shrewd thing about them. Once he said: "A Scotchman, though you vote nineteen times against him, will accost you with equal complaisance after each time; and the twentieth time he will get your vote."

His opinion of James Thomson, the poet of the *Seasons*, was that, while endowed with genuine poetic genius, he was yet given to express himself in such a cloud of words that the sense became too diffused. "One day when Shiels was sitting with me," he said, "I took down Thomson, and read aloud a large portion to him, and then asked, 'Is not that fine?' Shiels expressed the highest admiration. 'Well, sir,' said I, 'I have omitted every alternate line.'"

Johnson was not above a pun. "It will get rich — by degrees," he remarked, about a University

which he thought was bestowing its honours more with an eye to fees and bequests than to merit.

When Warburton was spoken of, Johnson remarked, "The worst of Warburton is that he has a rage for saying something when there is nothing to be said."

Of a lady of whom he had lost conceit, he said "She was wiggle-waggle; and I could never persuade her to be categorical."

Johnson was so long about his Dictionary that the patience of Miller, who had principal charge of the publication, was completely exhausted. When Johnson's messenger returned after delivering to Miller the last sheet, Johnson asked him, "Well, what did he say?" The lad replied that Miller's remark was, "Thank God! I have done with him!" "I am glad to know," said Johnson, "that he thanks God for anything."

Johnson favoured second marriages. "For," he said, "if a widower do not marry again, it might be concluded that his first wife had given him a disgust to marriage. But by taking a second wife, he pays the highest compliment to the first by showing that she made him so happy as a married man that he wishes to be so again."

Women in Johnson's time had few of the equal facilities with men which they are enjoying now. This may account for the judgment he pronounced upon the performance of a lady who had preached at a Quaker meeting. "A woman's preaching is

like a dog's walking on its hind legs. It does not do it well: but you are surprised to find it done at all."

While travelling in Mull, his walking-stick disappeared. Johnson declared that it had been stolen, adding that "the temptation was very great in Mull, owing to the scarcity of timber!"

When invited to dinner, Johnson looked for a good one. When on one occasion disappointed, he said on leaving, "It was a good enough dinner, but not a dinner to ask one to."

Of a more genial type is the humour of Charles Lamb, whose *Essays*, dealing delightfully and most suggestively often with the commonest topics from everyday life, effervesce with sly hits, happy puns, and amusing conceits.

Lamb can even charm by his play upon words. How pleasantly he does so in the Essay where he describes the "Festivities on the coming in of the New Year" as follows:—

"The Old Year being dead, and the New Year coming of age, which he does by calendar law as soon as the breath is out of the old gentleman's body, nothing would serve the young spark but he must give a dinner upon the occasion, to which all the days in the year were invited. The Festivals, whom he deputed as his stewards, were mightily taken with the notion. It was stiffly debated among them whether the Fasts should be admitted. Some

said the appearance of such lean, starved guests, with their mortified faces, would pervert the ends of the meeting. But the objection was over-ruled. Only the Vigils were requested to come with their lanterns, to light the gentle folks home.

"All the Days came to their day. Covers were provided for three hundred and sixty-five guests at the principal table, with an occasional knife-and-fork at the sideboard for Leap Year's Day.

"I should have told you that cards of invitation had been issued. The carriers were the Hours—twelve little, merry, whirligig foot-pages as you could desire to see, that went all round and found out the persons invited well enough, except Easter Day, which had lately shifted its quarters.

"Well, they all met at last, foul Days, fine Days, all sorts of Days, and a rare din they made of it. Rainy Days came in dripping, and Sunshiny Days helped them to change their stockings. Wedding Day was there in his marriage finery, a little the worse for wear. Pay Day came late, as he always does; and Doomsday sent word he might be expected.

"April Fool (as my young lord's jester) took upon himself to marshall the guests, and wild work he made with it—good Days and bad Days were so shuffled together, to the confounding of all sober horoscopy.

"After dinner came the toasts. As it had grown a little darkish by this time, Candlemas lustily

bawled out for lights, which was opposed by all the Days, who protested against barring Daylight.

"Mayday, with that sweetness which is peculiar to her, in a neat speech proposing the health of the founder, crowned the goblet with garlands. This being done, the lordly New Year, from the upper end of the table, in a cordial but somewhat lofty tone, returned thanks. He felt proud in meeting so many of his late worthy father's tenants, promised to improve their farms, and at the same time to abate, if anything was found unreasonable in their rents. At the mention of this the four Quarter Days involuntarily looked at each other and smiled; and April Fool whistled to the tune of 'New Brooms.'

"They next fell to quibbles and conundrums. The question being proposed, who had the greatest number of followers, the Quarter Days said there could be no question about that, for they had all the creditors in the world dogging their heels. All this while, Valentine's Day kept courting pretty May, who sat next him, slipping amorous *billet doux* under the table, till the Dog Days, who are naturally of a warm temperament, began to be jealous, and to bite and bark exceedingly.

"At last, Day being ended, all the Days called for their coats and greatcoats, and took their leave. Shortest Day went off in a deep, black fog, that wrapped the little gentleman all round like a hedgehog. Longest day went off westward in beautiful

crimson and gold,—the rest some in one fashion, some in another: but Valentine and pretty May took their departure together in one of the prettiest silvery twilights a Lover's Day could wish to set in."

Lamb's humour is often as instructive and suggestive as it is delightful. Hazlitt said, "Lamb often probes a question even by his play upon words."

A good story is told of Lamb and a somewhat pretentious poet, who had got a friend to submit some of his poems to Lamb shortly before he was to meet him at dinner. Lamb found the verses very poor—most of them feeble echoes of different authors. He found the author himself, when he arrived, empty and conceited. This awakened his spirit of mischievous waggery. During dinner he said, in the course of conversation, "That reminds me of some verses I wrote when I was very young," and then quoted a line or two which he recollected from the gentleman's book, to the latter's amazement and indignation. Lamb, who was immensely diverted, but kept perfectly serious, quoted some more lines in connection with another remark, begging the company to remember how very young he was when he composed them. The author again looked daggers at him. Lamb capped all by introducing the first lines of "Paradise Lost" ("Of man's first disobedience," etc.) as also written by himself, which brought the gentleman to his feet bursting with rage. He said he had sat by and allowed his

own "little verses" to be appropriated without protest, but when he saw Milton also being pilfered from, he could sit silent no longer. Afterwards Lamb used to revel in the telling of this story.

It is also told of him that, returning from a dinner-party, and taking his seat in an omnibus crowded with members of the party, another gentleman looked in and asked, "All full inside?" "I am, for one," said Lamb, gravely; "that second helping of oyster-pie completed the business for me!"

Once, at the India House, one of the authorities said to him, "I have remarked, Mr. Lamb, that you come very late in the morning." "Yes, sir," replied the wit, "but if I come very late, I go very early." The oddness of the remark so amused the reprover that he said no more.

A retired cheesemonger, who aped nobility and disliked any reference to the trade by which he had made his fortune, said haughtily, in a discussion about the Poor Law, "You must bear in mind, sir, that I have got rid of all that nonsense you refer to as the milk of human kindness." "I know it," said Lamb; "you turned it all into cheese."

The prince of punsters was Thomas Hood, some of whose choicest puns I have brought together in the volume, *A Feast of Fun*. Hood, in view of his parentage, might be ranked amongst the Scottish rather than amongst the English wits—just as Swift

on account of his parentage is claimed as English though he was born in Ireland. Perhaps Scotland should lay claim to Hood as a Scot who was born by mistake on the wrong side of the Border! But the rival claims may be settled happily by calling him a "British" humorist. His wit, however, was certainly more of the English than of the Scottish type.

But Hood's fun was not confined to his books or articles. He carried it into social life, and enjoyed nothing better than playing a good practical joke.

On one occasion he played one on some friends by way of reprisal. They had come to visit him for a day's fishing, and after rowing about the lake in an old punt, returned in high spirits, and when landing, suddenly gave the boat a push by way of a joke, so that Hood, who was last, went plump into the water. Fortunately the water was shallow, but the poet was wet through. It was playing with edged tools, however, to venture on such a trick, and Hood determined quietly to turn the tables. So he began to complain of aches, stitches, and cramps, and went indoors. His friends, rather ashamed by this time of their rough fun, persuaded him to go to bed, which he immediately did. His wife had received from him a quiet hint, and therefore kept her mind easy as she pretended to carry out the prescriptions of the repentant jokers. The doctor lived miles away, so they had to doctor the patient themselves, and all sorts of remedies were anxiously

administered. One rushed upstairs with a tea-kettle of boiling water; another staggered up under a tin bath; and a third brought the mustard with a look of abject contrition. Hood was all the time shaking internally with laughter, which they thought with alarm must be either fever or ague. At last Hood gave out in a sepulchral tone that he thought he was dying, and began to give some absurd directions about his will, which they were all too much frightened to see the fun of. On this, he could stand it no longer, and after hearing the penitent offenders beg his forgiveness for their unfortunate and foolish joke, and beseech him to believe in their remorse, he burst into shouts of laughter, which they at first thought was delirious frenzy, but which in the end betrayed the joke.

One of the most charming of English wits was Sydney Smith. His conversation, as well as his writings, sparkled with jokes.

It was he who, when he heard of a friend who had got a situation at the Cape, and who had been very sea-sick on his way out, throwing everything up, said anxiously, "I hope he did not throw up his appointment."

It was he who horrified a sensitive lady who was sitting beside him on a hot day by suddenly remarking, "I think we should take off our flesh and sit in our bones."

He alarmed another old lady by telling her that

he made a point of chaining up his big Newfoundland dog, because it had a passion for breakfasting on parish boys.

It was he who declared that an Irishman ploughing was the most ludicrous of all human objects—"a gigantic figure—a seven-foot machine for turning potatoes into human nature—wrapped up in an immense greatcoat, and urging on two starved ponies with dreadful imprecations and uplifted shillelagh."

Speaking of the huge, unsightly pigs fattened for the market, he spoke of the breeder's delight in observing the laudable propensity of the flesh to desert the cheap regions of the body, and agglomerate on those parts which are worth ninepence a pound.

It was he who spoke of a savage chief having cold missionary on the sideboard; and who, speaking of an intolerable bore and a grumbler, said these were the men who should be sent out as apostles to the cannibals, for they would so disagree with them as probably to make them discontinue their cannibal practices.

He had a sedate brother who was utterly destitute of wit, but was greatly distinguished for his other gifts. Sydney declared that he and his brother contradicted the law of gravitation, for his brother had risen by his gravity while he had sunk by his levity.

Writing about a tropical country, he said the

climate was delightful, but it had its drawbacks. "An insect with eleven legs is swimming in your teacup: a nondescript with nine wings is struggling in the small-beer: and a caterpillar with several dozen eyes in his belly is hastening over the bread and butter."

One can imagine the chuckle with which, when he was written to for the Smith coat-of-arms by a man who was compounding a history of Somersetshire families, he replied—"I regret, sir, that I cannot contribute to so valuable a work, but the Smiths never had any arms, and invariably sealed their letters with their thumbs."

He said of the Anglo-Saxon race, that it was made for two purposes—to manufacture calico and steal land.

On one occasion, after preaching a charity sermon, in the course of which he had referred to the English as distinguished by their love of species, the collection proved disappointingly small. Whereupon he said—"I made a mistake in speaking of the English as distinguished by love for their species: I should have said, love for their *specie*."

Speaking of failures in life through want of courage, he said—"If we are to do anything worth doing in this world, it will not do to stand shivering on the bank, and thinking of the cold and the danger, but jump in and scramble through as well as we can. With regard, for instance, to intended publication, delay was all very well in the days

before the flood when a man could consult his friends about it for a hundred and fifty years, and then live to see its success for six or seven centuries afterwards; but under present conditions a man waits, and doubts, and hesitates, and consults his brother, and his uncle, and his first cousins, and his particular friends, till one fine day he discovers that he is sixty-five years of age, and that he has lost so much time in consulting first cousins and particular friends that he has no time left to follow their advice."

In uttering a warning about the pursuit of national glory as a thing that has to be sweetly paid for, he said—"We can inform Jonathan what are the inevitable consequences of being too fond of glory. Taxes upon everything, as we have come to know. The schoolboy whips his taxed top; the beardless youth manages his taxed horse, with a taxed bridle, on a taxed road; and the dying Englishman, pouring his medicine, which has paid 7 per cent., into a spoon that has paid 15 per cent., flings himself back upon his chintz bed, which has paid 22 per cent., and expires in the arms of an apothecary, who has paid a licence of a hundred pounds for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then immediately taxed, from 2 to 10 per cent. Besides the probate, large fees are demanded for burying him in the chancel; his virtues are handed down to posterity on taxed marble; and he is then gathered to his fathers—to be taxed no more."

At a party in Mr. Romilly's, at which his scientific friend, Mrs. Marcet, was present, and also Macaulay, the conversation turned on Dante's *Inferno*, and the tortures he had invented.

"He may be a great poet," said Sydney Smith, "but as to inventing tortures, I consider him a mere bungler, lacking in knowledge of human nature. If I had taken it in hand, I would have shown what torture really is. For instance (he said, turning to Mrs. Marcet), you should be doomed to listen for a thousand years to conversations between Caroline and Emily, where Caroline should always give wrong explanations in chemistry, and Emily in the end be unable to distinguish an acid from an alkali. You, Macaulay, let me see—you should be dumb. False dates and facts of the reign of Queen Anne should for ever be shouted in your ears; and you be unable to utter a single word of correction. Liberal and honest opinions should be ridiculed in your presence; and you be powerless to speak a syllable in their defence. What tortures are there in Dante equal to these?"

Another of the sprightliest English humorists of our time was Douglas Jerrold. As an author he excelled in light pieces for the stage. But some of his wittiest sayings and some of his best puns were spontaneous—occurring in conversation or in answer to remarks made by others.

A clergyman was boring him with interminable

arguments about the great evil of the time being the surplus population. "Yes," said Jerrold impatiently, "the *surplice* population."

A prosy old gentleman, meeting him as he was passing at his usual quick pace along Regent Street, stopped him and began: "Well, Jerrold, my dear boy, what's going on?" "I am," said Jerrold, and vanished in the crowd.

At a dinner, one gentleman who had been eating a dish of sheep's head with great gusto, exclaimed, as at last he laid down his knife and fork, "Sheep's head for ever! say I." "There's egotism," said Jerrold.

Speaking of Mother Eve, Jerrold said she ate the forbidden fruit that she might have the pleasure of dressing.

One day at a party, Jerrold said he would undertake to make a pun upon anything his friends liked to suggest. One of them, thinking to give him a poser, asked whether he could pun upon the Signs of the Zodiac. To which Jerrold replied promptly, "By Jemini, I Can-cer."

Tired of attending numberless public dinners, he declared that if an earthquake were to wreck the whole country to-morrow the English would manage to meet and dine somewhere among the rubbish, just to celebrate the event.

An acquaintance called on Jerrold to arouse his sympathy on behalf of an impecunious author. But the hat had gone round too often already. "How

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much does he want this time?" asked Jerrold. "Well," said the other, "we think a four and two noughts would put him straight." "Then," said Jerrold, "put me down for one of the noughts."

Of an empty-headed bore who was tall and very thin, Jerrold said, "He is like a pin but lacking the head and point."

Sometimes, through a joke, Jerrold conveyed good advice or a word of warning. He was enjoying a drive one day with a jovial spendthrift, behind a fine pair of greys. "Well, Jerrold," said his impecunious friend, "what do you think of my greys!" "To tell you the truth," said Jerrold, "I was thinking more of your *duns!*"

Jerrold showed his wit, however, in comedy and other forms as well as in puns. His *Curtain Lectures of Mrs. Caudle* give a ludicrous picture of the Cockney shopkeeper's wife, and the use she makes of the only time when she can give Mr. Caudle a bit of her mind without risk or interruption, or any chance of his making his escape—namely, when the two have retired to rest for the night (what at least *she* would have called "rest," but what poor Job often found to be something very different). Here is a sample, administered on a rainy night, when Job had lent an acquaintance the family umbrella:—

"Well, Mr. Caudle, that's pretty conduct, giving that man our only umbrella. That's the third umbrella gone since Christmas. *What do you say?*

What were you to do? Why, let him go home in the rain, to be sure. I'm very certain there was nothing about *him* that could spoil. Take cold, indeed! He doesn't look like one of the sort to take cold. Besides, he'd have better taken cold than taken our only umbrella. Do you hear the rain, Mr. Caudle? I say! do you hear the rain? And it is St. Swithin's Day, too. So we are in for six weeks of it now, and no stirring all the time out of the house. What! *He* return the umbrella! As if anybody ever *did* return an umbrella. There—do you hear it on the window? Worse and worse? And for *six weeks?* And no umbrella!

"I should like to know how the children are to go to school to-morrow? They shan't go through such weather, I'm determined. No; they shall stop at home and never learn anything—the blessed creatures!—sooner than *go* and get *wet*. And when they grow *up*, I wonder who they'll have to *thank* for knowing *nothing*.

"But I know why you lent the umbrella. You knew I was going out to tea at dear mother's to-morrow—you knew that; and you did it on purpose. Don't tell me; you hate me to go there. But don't you think it, Mr. Caudle. No, sir; if it comes down in buckets-full, I'll go all the more. No; and I won't have a cab. Where do you think the money's to come from? Cabs, indeed! I should like to know who's to pay for 'em; *I* can't pay for 'em, and I'm sure *you* can't, if you go on as you do;

giving away your property, and beggaring your children—buying umbrellas.

"Do you hear the rain, Mr. Caudle? I say, do you hear it? But I don't care—I'll go to mother's to-morrow: I will; and what's more, I'll walk every step of the way—and you know that will give me my death.

"Nice clothes, I shall get too, through weather like this. My best gown and bonnet will be spoilt quite. What do you say? *I needn't wear them?* Indeed, Mr. Caudle, I *shall* wear 'em. No, sir, I'm not going out a dowdy to please you or anybody else.

"No, sir; I won't borrow an umbrella. No; and you shan't buy one. If you bring home another umbrella, I'll throw it in the street. I'll have my own umbrella or none at all.

"It was only last week I had a new nozzle put to that umbrella. I'm sure, if I'd have known as much as I do now, it might have gone without one for me. Paying for new nozzles, for other people to laugh at you. Oh, it's all very well for you—you can go to sleep. You've no thought of your poor, patient wife, and your own dear children.

"The children, too! Dear things! They'll be sopping wet: for they shan't stop at home—they shan't lose their learning: it's all their father will leave 'em I'm sure. But they *shall* go to school. Don't tell me I said they shouldn't: you are so aggravating, Caudle; you'd spoil the temper of an

angel. They *shall* go to school; mark that. And if they get their deaths of cold as they will, it's not my fault – I didn't lend the umbrella."

"At length," writes Caudle, "I fell asleep, dimly conscious of my wife still speaking, the last words being 'that umbrella.'"

Thackeray had not the same overflowing and irresistible wit as Douglas Jerrold; but he could hit off the weakness and foibles of people in his own way with equal effect. How he impaled snobbery in his *Punch* papers!

Thackeray had a pure love of nonsense, but nonsense of the kind only possible to clever men—as in his "Story *à la mode*" in the *Cornhill*. Some of its realistic touches would have done credit to Gulliver. Of his inimitable satire, a characteristic specimen will be found in the chapter on the humour of the Cockneys.

In wealth and geniality of humour, no English author surpasses Charles Dickens. He sees the ludicrous side of everything, and even in his casual expressions, and in describing the commonest and most prosaic things he is exceedingly racy. In the *Christmas Carol*, we have the potatoes that are being boiled for Bob Cratchet's dinner "bubbling up and knocking loudly at the saucepan lid to be let out and peeled." In the housetop scene, visible from Mr. Podgers' window, we see "the revolving

chimney pots on one great stack of buildings, turning gravely to one another, every now and then, as if to whisper the result of their separate observation of what was going on below." We have Mrs. Todgers herself, in the difficult position of not knowing which side to espouse in some quarrel, "preserving a genteel grimness suitable to any state of mind, and involving any shade of opinion."

We have also Mr. Winkle at the edge of the ice-pond, "expected by the ladies to cut a magnificent figure, but who is all the time vainly endeavouring to find out how the skates should be put on, assisted by Mr. Tupman, who knows rather less about skates than a Hindoo."

What fountains of laughter have we in some of Dickens's characters—Old Weller, Sam, Captain Cuttle, Mrs. Gamp, Toots, and Micawber—people as real to us as the friends we meet in everyday life!

Even his first efforts—his *Sketches by Boz*—are full of racy descriptions, that remain as fresh and attractive as ever.

One is his sketch of "Boating on the River Thames," and especially the party of city youths, who, all the way down, had been boasting of their nautical skill and experience. As they approach the boating-place, and begin to realise that words will have to give place to performance, their enthusiasm begins to abate. On getting into the boat, every one shows the most self-denying readiness to let somebody else have the oar. After a great deal of

changing and fidgeting, consequent on one gentleman not being able to pull on this side, and another not being able to pull on that, and a third not being able to pull at all, they all get seated, and the boatman shoves them off, whereupon, amidst an extraordinary struggling and splashing, the boat's head turns away in the wrong direction.

"Back wa'ater, sir!" shouts the boatman from the shore. "Back wa'ater, you sir, aft!" Upon which everybody, ignorant of "aft," and thinking he must be the person referred to, they all back water, and back comes the boat stern first towards the starting-place.

"Back wa'ater, you sir, aft! pull round, you sir, for'ad, can't you?" shouts the boatman in a frenzy of excitement.

"Pull round, Tom, can't you?" echoes one of the party.

"I ain't for'ad."

"Yes, you are—pull man!"—whereupon Tom, at the imminent risk of bursting a blood vessel, pulls and splashes, and pulls madly till the boat's head is fairly round.

"That's right! now pull all on you!" cries the boatman; adding to the man beside him, "Blow'd if hever I see sich a set o' muffs!"

In the meantime away goes the boat zig-zag, every one of the six oars dipping into the water at a different time: every now and then one rower plunging his oar into the water, and not being able to get it

up again, or taking a terrific pull without putting it into the water at all—in either case pitching over on the back of his head with startling violence, and exhibiting the soles of his pumps to those in the stern, in a most humiliating manner.

The ladies did not escape. In another of the Sketches, "Boz" described the pious devotion of the young ladies of the parish when a handsome young curate, who parted his hair in the middle like a Norman arch, and wore a diamond ring on his left hand, which he always applied to his left cheek when he read the prayers, was appointed to the church. Innumerable were the calls made by prudent mammas; innumerable the invitations he got to family dinners. Pews in the immediate neighbourhood of the pulpit rose in value; a seat in the front gallery was not to be had for love or money.

A few weeks after, the curate began to cough: four fits of coughing one morning between the Litany and the Epistle, and five in the afternoon service. If the young ladies were energetic before, their sympathy and solicitude now knew no bounds. Such a man as the curate—such a dear—such a perfect love—to be ill, perhaps consumptive! It was too much. Anonymous presents of black currant jam, and lozenges, elastic waistcoats, bosom friends, and warm stockings, poured in upon the curate, until he was as completely fitted out with winter clothing as if he were on the verge of an expedition to the North Pole.

In another of his Sketches, describing one of those knots of pot-house politicians who gather in public-house bars, to smoke clay pipes and to settle, as one might suppose from their talk, the affairs of the nation over a pint of porter, Dickens hit off to the life the pot-house orator—that kind of man you always find in such companies, who by his glibness of tongue, his command of magniloquent language, and his authoritative style of laying down the law, acquires amongst his empty-pated fellow-topers the reputation of being a most remarkable man.

"Boz" describes the company seated round the fire, smoking in momentary silence, overwhelmed by the weight of the opinion of which the leading politician of the party—a red-nosed man with an oracular air—has just been delivering himself.

At last, a light-haired man with a sharp nose, remarks in a mild and respectful tone, "Very extraordinary."

"Not at all extraordinary!" says the red nosed orator, snapping him up at once; "not at all. *Why* should it be extraordinary. *Prove* it to be extraordinary."

"Oh, if you come to that ——" says the light haired man meekly.

"Come to that! But we *must* come to that. We stand in these days upon a calm elevation of intellectual attainment, not in the dark recess of mental deprivation. *Proof* is what I require—proof, and not assertions, in these stirring times. Every

gen'l'man that knows me, knows what was the nature and effect of my observations when the Tiddling Street Society proposed to recommend a candidate for—that place down in Cornwall, I forget the name of it.

"'I think Mr. Snobee,' said Mr. Wilson, 'is a fit and proper person to represent the borough in Parliament.'

"'*Prove* it!' says I.

"'He is the friend of Reform,' says Mr. Wilson.

"'Prove it!' says I.

"'The abolitionist of the national debt, the unflinching opponent of pensions, the uncompromising advocate of the negro, the reducer of sinecures,' says Mr. Wilson.

"'Prove it,' says I.

"'His *acts* prove it,' says he.

"'Prove *them*,' says I.

"And he couldn't prove them; and the borough didn't have Mr. Snobee; and if you carried this principle to the full extent, you'd have no debt, no pensions, no sinecures, no negroes, no nothing. And then, standing upon an elevation of intellectual attainment, and having reached the summit of popular prosperity, you might bid defiance to the nations of the earth, and erect yourselves in the proud consciousness of wisdom and superiority. *This* is my argument—this has *always* been my argument—and if I was a member of the House of Commons to-morrow, I'd make 'em shake in their shoes with it!"

"Well," says the sharp-nosed man in a very slow and soft voice, addressing the company in general, "I always do say that of all the gentlemen I have the pleasure of meeting in this room there is not one whose conversation I like to hear so much as Mr. Rogers'."

"Oh, well, as to what my friend Mr. Ellis here is pleased to say, that is not for me to say anything about. But what I do say is that we are men and not slaves."

The red-nosed man here rises and jerks his hat off the peg.

"And what is a man? What is an Englishman? Is he to be trampled upon by every oppressor? Is he to be knocked down at everybody's bidding? What's freedom? Not a standing army. What's a standing army? Not freedom. What's general happiness? Not universal misery. Liberty ain't the window tax, is it? The Lords ain't the Commons, are they?" And the red-faced man, gradually bursting into a radiating sentence, in which such adjectives as "dastardly," "oppressive," "violent," and "sanguinary," formed the most conspicuous words, knocks his hat indignantly over his eyes, and walks out.

"Wonderful man!" says he of the sharp nose.

"Splendid speaker!" says another.

"Great power!" says everybody else.

In another Sketch, "Boz" portrayed two of those brainless youths, who as often as they get their

quarter's salary, go away to perform the process known as "making a night of it."

The two described in the Sketch, namely, Mr. Thomas Potter and Mr. Robert Smithers, met in the evening at a place where they had dinner; and after dinner, as they were going to make a night of it, they ordered the waiter to bring them two "goes" of Scotch whisky and a couple of his mildest Havannahs. When the two "goes" were gone and the cigars smoked, they ordered in two more "goes" and two more mild Havannahs; and the "goes" kept coming in and the Havannahs kept going out, until what with the drinking, and fighting, and puffing, Mr. Robert Smithers began to doubt the mildness of the Havannahs, and to feel as if he had been sitting in a hackney-coach with his back to the horses.

Mr. Thomas Potter, on the contrary, was constantly volunteering inarticulate declarations that he was "all right"; in proof of which he feebly bespoke the evening paper after the next gentleman: but finding it a matter of some difficulty to discover any news in its columns, or to ascertain distinctly whether it had any columns at all, he walked slowly out to look for the moon, and after coming back quite pale with looking at the sky so long, and attempting to express mirth at Mr. Robert Smithers having fallen asleep, sat down and gradually went to sleep also.

Then how, on awaking again, he found that Mr.

Robert Smithers had awakened also; and how they both agreed that it was extremely unwise to eat so many pickled walnuts with the chops, as it was a notorious fact that they always made people queer and sleepy; indeed, that had it not been for the whisky and cigars, there was no knowing what harm they mightn't have done them.

Then how they went to the theatre at half-price, and began to make so much noise that they were turned out. Whereupon they went along the street singing a song with short verses of two lines and a chorus of ten. Then how they went and had some small glasses of brandy and large glasses of soda, and began to get oblivious, till there was nothing but a confused mixture of noises, heads and heels, mud and gaslights, thick doors and paving-stones.

Then how, when they came to themselves in the morning, they found themselves in the police office, and were brought before the magistrates, before whom it came out that Mr. Thomas Potter and Mr. Robert Smithers had, in divers streets, assaulted five men and ten boys; had terrified whole streets with wild cries of fire; had destroyed two policemen's uniforms; and on being searched had been found to have feloniously possessed themselves of five door-knockers, two bell handles, and a wig; and were accordingly fined 5s. each for being what is vulgarly called drunk, and £54 for seventeen assaults at 40s. a head, with liberty to speak to the prosecutors.

One of the last men in British literature from whom we should have expected humorous writing was Alfred Tennyson. Yet his "Northern Farmer" showed what the Laureate could have done in this sphere had he pleased. The old farmer lies dying, and is casting up to the nurse his views of the situation. He had done his duty by the land; and had followed the squire in his politics without question and without complaint. These were virtues the importance of which he could comprehend.

"I 'allus voated wi' Squoire, an' Chooreh, an' Staate,
An' in the woorst o' toimes, I war never agin' the raate."

He had also, up to the time of his wife's death, complied with customs that were beyond his comprehension, but were enjoined by the parson. These he had conformed to, because (evidently) in the humility of his faith, he believed that established customs had some reason—secret if not obvious—for existing, and that a sermon was as much a dispensation of Providence to be humbly submitted to, and sat out, as a draught.

"An' I hallus coom'd to 's Chooreh afoor moy Solly wur deäd,
An' heerd um a bummin awaay loike a buzzard clock ower my 'eid;
An' I niver knaw'd what a mean'd but I thowt a' ad summut to saäy,
An' I thowt a' said what a' owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy."

No words could describe more graphically and more ludicrously, in their very truthfulness, the blind acquiescence of the English clodhopper in the right and might of unintelligible customs.

While he respects "parson," much as the Scotch farmer respects the untimely snowstorm, as sent for some good purpose which might be revealed hereafter, he cannot suppress a certain amount of contempt when he compares the divine's labours with his own—the labour of the pulpit compared with the labour which has rooted up all the furze bushes and carted away stones from a great piece of barren waste, turning it into grazing or cornland—

> "He reads wonn sarmin a week,
> An' I a stubb'd Thornaby waäste."

He is disposed indeed to complain of the divine interference with his plans for getting the redemption of this waste completed.

"Dubbut look at the waäste; theer warn't not feead for a cow,
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' look at it now—
Warn't worth nowt a haacre, an' now theer's lots o' feeäd,
Fourscoor yows upon it, an' some on it doon i' seead,
Nobbut a bit on its left, an' I mean'd to 'a stubbed at fall,
Done it ta-year a' mean'd, an' runned plow thruffet un' all,

If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let me aloän,
Mei, wi' haäte oondered haäcre o' Squoires, an' lond o' my oän."

He feels that he ought to have been left to finish the work. He even warns Providence of the responsibility incurred in thus cutting off his work prematurely—

"Do godamoighty knaw what a's doin' a-taäkin of me?"

He thinks he might have taken some one who could better have been spared. He might have taken Jones or Robbins.

"But godamoighty a moost taake mea an' taake ma now,
Wi' auf the cows to cauve an' Thornaby holms to plow."

The dying man has but one comfort—that he will be gone before any one comes to supersede human labour like his own with the heartless power of steam.

"But summun 'ull come ater mea mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm,
Huzzin an' maazin the blessed fealds wi' the devil's oän teäm.
Sin' a mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
But sin I mun doy, I mun doy, for I couldn' abear to see it."

Spurgeon has been, in our day, perhaps the best English specimen of humorist in the pulpit, though he indulged his humour more in the earlier than in the later years of his ministry. To the end, however, in his lectures and talks to his students, he sometimes revelled in fun, and in familiar conversation his remarks and replies to questions were often very amusing.

The Rev. John Robertson said that he told Spurgeon about a man in Stonehaven, who attended the Free Church (of which at that time Mr. Robertson was minister), and by way of protest against Mr. Robertson's ways, sat in front of the pulpit holding a finger ostentatiously in each ear.

"What should you have done with such a man?" he asked Mr. Spurgeon.

Spurgeon said with a twinkle in his eye, "I would have prayed the Lord to cause a fly to alight on that man's nose."

Spurgeon used sometimes to speak of the sluggish apathy and torpor of the people in his native county of Essex. When a friend brought him the news one morning that there had been a slight earthquake in Essex on the previous night, he said, "Thank God! my old county is moving at last!"

When a youth asked Spurgeon if he would advise him to be a minister, Spurgeon startled him with the reply, "Don't if you can help it." His meaning was that a man should have a resistless impulse before undertaking such work.

He once spoke of some men with little heart for the work who went into holy orders, and hadn't been many months preaching before they took a sore throat and went away to Jerusalem.

He warned his students, when they got churches, never to neglect their pulpit preparations. "People will want you to drink tea with them; but if you give them good food on Sunday they will excuse you for not joining them. If, on the contrary, Sunday's joint is a grim scrag of mutton, with plenty of divisions but nothing to divide, no amount of tea-drinking at their houses will long reconcile them."

His "John Ploughman's Talk" is replete with blended wisdom and humour. Take a specimen from what "John" says about drinking:—"Fellows who have no estate but their labour, and no family arms except those they work with, will yet spend their little hard earnings at the beershop. No sooner are their wages paid than away they go to the 'Spotted Dog' or the 'King's Head,' to contribute their share of fools' pence towards keeping up the landlord's red face and round corporation. Drinking water neither makes a man sick nor in debt, nor his wife a widow: and yet some men hardly know the flavour of it. But beer, guzzled down as it is by many a working man, is nothing better than brown ruin. Dull, droning blockheads sit on the ale-bench, and wash out whatever little sense they ever had. Look most to your spending. The art is not in making money but in keeping it: little

expenses, like mice in a barn, when they are many, make great waste. When you mean to save, begin with your mouth: there are many thieves down the red lane. The ale-jug is a great waster."

His famous lecture on "Candles" was a delineation of the different sorts of religious professors, humorous and clever to a degree.

In Parliament Lord Palmerston was a good specimen of the humorist—of one, at least, who knew well how to employ humour to serve his purpose.

On one occasion he turned the edge of an attack by Du Cane, who had delivered it with violent gestures, by the remark that the speech was the best he had ever *seen!*

On another occasion he turned the laugh against John Bright, who had been delivering a philippic against the Government in pulpit tones, by referring to him as "my honourable and reverend friend."

On yet another occasion, at the time when the volunteer movement was being organised, he succeeded by a dexterous reply in turning the edge of a powerful speech by Macgnire, demanding that Ireland, as well as Great Britain, should be allowed to raise volunteer regiments. It was a speech very difficult to answer without giving offence to the Irish. But the wily and witty leader of the House was equal to the occasion. He eulogised the speech, but said it greatly under-rated Irish ability. It was well known that the English peasant was ill-qualified

to fight, or even to walk properly, without training. But who that knew Ireland would speak of the Irish not knowing how to fight—of their needing to be trained to fight. The Irish were soldiers born. It was absurd to speak of a volunteer movement as needed for them.

The remark took the wind completely out of Mr. Macguire's sails. The compliment delighted the Irish, while its shelving of the Irish volunteer proposal relieved the minds of those to whom the proposal was obnoxious.

There was also wit, as well as good sense, in his famous remark that "Dirt is simply matter in the wrong place."

John Bright was another who sometimes convulsed the House with the touches of wit and humour that occurred in his most serious and eloquent speeches. His pungent expressions and descriptions had also the quality of wit. His charge against the Conservative Government, on one occasion, of issuing "political flash notes"; on another of pursuing a foreign policy which was "nothing but a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the British aristocracy," were amongst these happy hits. So also was his famous likening of the Adullamite party, which was neither exactly Conservative nor Liberal, to one of those little Skye terriers so very shaggy that it is difficult to know which is the head and which the tail, leaving the beholder in doubt as to the direction in which it may be expected to go.

More pronounced as a Parliamentary humorist is the veteran, Sir Wilfred Lawson. Some people say that drink is the best wakener of wit. And it may be frankly conceded that some people never exhibit wit except when they have drink; and further, that the wit awakened by drink requires a good deal of drink in the listeners before they can appreciate it. But it is noteworthy that the wittiest English member in the British Parliament is not only an abstainer, but leader of the Temperance party.

Some of his happiest hits have been in verse. He gave play to his wit recently in the following lines with reference to the Workmen's Compensation Act, under which compensation could only be given if a man fell thirty feet:—

"If you fall thirty feet, slap bang on the street,
You'll get cash if your head should be split;
But if, cutting it fine, you fall just twenty-nine,
In that case you won't get a bit.

"So the moral is this, if I'm not far amiss,
If you are a wise working-man,
If you feel you've a call to accomplish a fall,
Then tumble as far as you can."

In the course of a debate on the Licensing Question, after Mr. Bass had spoken, Sir Wilfred said that Mr. Bass was evidently looking forward to the time when a happier Eden should be restored to mankind, and when every man should be sitting under his own fig tree drinking Bass's pale ale.

LIBRARY

"Sir, I am told you have a barrel of beer in your room, which is contrary to all orders." "Well, sir, it is true. But the doctors told me if I drank this beer I should get stronger." "And are you stronger?" "Yes, sir, indeed I am. For when the barrel came in I could scarcely move it, and now I can move it round the room."
—*Page 171.*

In the course of another debate he said: "The teetotaler gives no trouble to the community. I remember saying to a gentleman once that I never knew a teetotaler in a police court, but he said he had. I asked him what he was in for, to which he replied, 'For being drunk and disorderly!'"

He revels in good stories, and never lacks for one. I heard him tell one about a student at college who was sent for by the Don, who said, "Sir, I am told that you have a barrel of beer in your room, which is contrary to all orders." "Well, sir," said the student, "it is true. But the doctors told me if I drank this beer I should get stronger." The Don said, "And are you stronger?" "Yes, sir, indeed I am. For when the barrel came in I could scarcely move it, and now I can move it round the room."

I heard him tell another about a teetotaler who was asked if he was going to the funeral of a prominent local publican. He said, "No, I am not going to the funeral, but I approve of it."

The story recalls Sydney Smith's reply when he was asked if he objected to bury Dissenters. "On the contrary," he said, "I should be glad to bury them all."

It belongs to Sir Wilfred's love of fun that he can enjoy even the abuse with which exasperated opponents assail him. He amused a meeting once by telling them some of the names that had been applied to him by a licensed victuallers' paper, which he jocosely referred to as the "Barrel Organ."

He said he had been called the "Watery Jester," the "Old Cracked Teapot," the "Washed-out Water Party," the "Peregrinating Pump-handle," the "Tea-drinking Twaddler," the "Apostle of Slops," "Pot-bottle Pump Orator." He said he thought no one could have any doubt after that about his being a titled man.

English sociality, especially round the dinner-table, has led to the cultivation of that sparkling kind of wit that best harmonises with such occasions—where even good stories, if long, are out of place, and where if a man is to be witty, his wit must be epigrammatic—a pop and over, like the uncorking of a soda-water bottle.

For instance, when Porson was told that a gentleman (of whom he had a poor opinion) had been left a large estate by a person who had seen him only once, "It would not have happened," said Porson, "if the person had seen him twice."

A gentleman sitting opposite Quin at table had helped himself to a large piece of the pudding in front of him. Seeing Quin looking at it, he said, "Shall I help you to some of this pudding?" Quin looked first at the dish and then at the gentleman's plate, and asked, "Which *is* the pudding?"

Foote declared of a certain miser that he would take the beam out of his eye at once if he knew he could sell the timber.

When Thackeray was in America, and had set down before him for the first time a plate of huge

American oysters, he looked at them in wonder and said, "What am I to do with these?" "Swallow them, of course." "Well, then," said Thackeray, "here goes," and took one. "How do you feel after it?" asked his host. "I feel," said Thackeray, "as if I had swallowed a baby."

Charles Matthews, in proposing the toast of the Army and Navy at his farewell banquet, said he had never been in the army, though he had been in many a mess; and the only chance of joining the navy was once when he had a narrow escape of getting into the Fleet.

The late Lord Derby, when suffering from the gout, received from an admirer a case of white wine, with the assurance that if he would drink that wine and avoid all others, his gout would soon be gone. The Earl having — out of curiosity — tasted the wine, returned it, with the remark, "I prefer the gout."

Labouchere was one of the wits of Parliament. A funny story is told of his interview with a gentleman who had been hearing Labouchere's uncle (Lord Taunton) in the House of Lords, and was under the impression that he was Labouchere's father. On meeting Labouchere in the dining-room he said, "I have just been listening to your father." "Indeed! Where?" "In the House of Lords." "I am so glad to hear you say so," said Labouchere. "My father died some years since, and we have always been anxious to know where he had gone."

In this kind of wit, and still more in puns, which conform to the same conditions, the keener wits amongst the English excel.

Leigh Hunt, in one of his essays, gives an amusing specimen of the clever kind of nonsense that even "the wisest men" can take delight in listening to, and passing round with their own contributions.

In a company of literary men, mention was made of a new book by an able man, who was yet a most uninteresting writer. One said, "Have you seen it?"

"Yes. Driest book I ever read."

"Dry!" said the first. "It's like a chip!"

"A chip's an orange to it," said another.

"It made me feel dust in my eyes," said a third.

"It made me thirsty," said a fourth.

"Yes," said a fifth, "if you take it up at breakfast, it makes you drink four cups of coffee instead of two."

"I had to call, at page 4, for beer," said a sixth.

"They say it made two reviewers take to drinking," said a seventh.

"I hear," said an eighth, "they keep it lying now in hotels, to make people drink double. The landlord says, 'A new book, sir,' and goes out and orders two neguses to be ready, as they are sure to be ordered within a few minutes."

Said a ninth, "They say it dries up everything so rapidly that it is likely to hurt the draining business."

"Bet you the paint there would cost fowve pounds not to speak o' the puttin' of it on!" *Page 150.*

"Yes," said a tenth, "but it is going to be a great blessing to Holland. The sea can't come near it, and the Dutch are subscribing for it, to serve them instead of dykes."

We have all heard similar talk—nonsense, and yet witty nonsense—breaking in as a delightful variety and refreshment even in the midst of grave conversation.

English folk (like other people) often give amusement where they least intend it. This, amongst the masses of the English rural population, usually results from ignorance and absence of culture.

A friend, visiting a picture gallery in Manchester, came upon a group of country bumpkins who were at that moment standing open-mouthed in front of a large and beautiful painting. One at length remarked profoundly, "Bet you the paint there would cost foive pounds—not to speak o' the puttin' of it on!"

Miss Ellice Hopkins once, in describing her work amongst the labouring classes in the Midlands, spoke of the importance of using amongst them the plainest possible language. She gave a most amusing illustration. A sick woman had got a mixture from the doctor, which, the label stated, was to be taken "in a recumbent attitude." She had no idea what a "recumbent attitude" was, but concluded it was some kind of spoon or dish which should be used in taking the medicine. She sent to several of the neighbours to ask if they knew any

one who had a recumbent attitude, and whether they could get the loan of it for her. None of them, however, had heard of such a thing before. At last she sent to an old woman who had the reputation of being well up in all such matters. From this old woman came the reply that she once had a very fine recumbent attitude, but had lent it out to somebody, and had never got it back again.

Scotch folk often get amusement out of the extraordinary ignorance of Scotland and Scotch ways still to be found even amongst educated English people. An old jeweller whom I met at dinner in London, asked me when reference was made to my having arrived from Scotland—"Do you know Henry Robinson?" "No, who is he?" "He's a friend of mine. He has been in Scotland for three weeks." It seemed difficult for him to realise how his friend and I could both be in Scotland for three weeks without frequently seeing one another.

Equal ignorance sometimes crops up even in the English papers. When Tommy Burns took his famous dive from the top of the Tay Bridge, one London paper in referring to it described it as the wonderful feat of jumping from the Tay Bridge into the Forth! This certainly would have been a feat, seeing that it involved a preliminary jump across the whole county of Fife. It was as if some one had been described as diving from London Bridge into the Mersey.

LIBRARY

"There should have been an 'Hem,' sir; but had been put into 'Hell' by mistyke."—*Page 177.*

On another occasion, when the Duke and Duchess of York were in Scotland, a London paper spoke of them having left Scotland by express train for Dalmeny on a visit to Lord Rosebery.

Sometimes the amusement springs from one or other of the ludicrous varieties of pronunciation in different parts of England. Especially is this the case with the strange and widespread maltreatment of the letter "H," banishing it from its proper place and intruding it where it has no right.

I remember the hymn which begins with the line—

"Like as the eagle cuts the air,"

being given out thus:—

"Like as the Heagle cuts the Hair."

A friend of the name of M'Lacrin, who was putting up at Charing Cross Hotel, sent the waiter to see if there were any letters for him. The waiter was long in returning, the letters addressed M'Lacrin having got into the wrong pigeon-hole. "They should have been in 'Heen,' sir; but had been put into 'Hell' by mistyke."

A story is told of a pompous manufacturer at a school examination asking a smart boy, "Wot's the capital of 'Olland?" To which the boy replied, "'The letter 'H,' sir."

The following clever and amusing *jeu d'esprit* on this odd English practice is worth preserving. It was entitled "The Letter H's Complaint of Abuse,

and Petition for Uniformity," presented to the inhabitants of London :—

"Whereas by you I have been driven
From (H)ouse and (H)ome, from (H)ope and (H)eaven
And placed by your most learned Society
In Hexile, Hanguish, and Hanxiety,
And used without one just pretence,
With Harrogance and Hinsolence :
I here demand just restitution,
And beg you'll mend your elocution.

The Cockneys' Reply.

Whereas we've rescued you, ingrate,
From *H*andcuff, *H*orror, and from *H*ate,
From *H*untsmen, *H*orsepond, and from *H*alter,
And given you place before the Altar,
And where you scarce could claim to be
In *H*onour and in *H*onesty :
We deem your prayer a rude intrusion,
And will not change our elocution."

These lines, however, belong specially to the Cockneys, whose humour forms the subject of the next chapter.

COCKNEY HUMOUR

COCKNEY HUMOUR

WHAT *is* "Cockney" humour? It belongs to London: and yet to use the term Cockney humour as equivalent to London humour would be hopelessly misleading. There is a wealth of humour in London (as we have already seen) independent of Cockney humour.

Humour from other parts of England, and humour belonging to Scotland, Ireland, and America, is contributed to London papers and magazines, is published by London publishers, is heard in London society, and in the London streets, parks, clubs, and other places of resort. This cannot be properly called even London humour, far less Cockney. It is *in* the city, but not *of* it.

Still, within the vast metropolis, there are found in abundance, amusing features of character, kinds of humour, and odd ways of looking at things, developed by the peculiar conditions of life in that stupendous city with its four or five millions of people—a nation within a nation.

Conspicuous amongst these, and in strange contrast with the cosmopolitan aspects of the metropolis, is the parochial narrowness of view and ludicrous ignorance of the outside world that characterize

what may be called the typical Londoner. The very vastness of the city seems to fill up the whole horizon of his life as completely as the mountains do with a Highland glen. London to him is the great world, all other cities and lands are merely its environment.

It is to this amusing ignorance of everything outside of London that the term "Cockney" specially applies, and from which the very word took its rise, if we are to accept the account of its origin given by Dugdale in his *Origines Juridicales*. According to that account, a young Londoner, who was on a visit to the country for the first time, called the neighing of a horse "laughing." He was told that he should have said "neighing." Next morning, hearing a cock crow, and being willing to show that he had not forgotten his lesson of the day before, he exclaimed, "How that cock neighs!" After that he was called "Cockneigh" or "Cockney," and the nickname came to be applied to all Londoners, as likely to be equally ignorant of the conditions and ways of life outside of the city. The word is otherwise derived from the Italian *cuccagna*, applicable to a city of luxury and idleness. Hence Cockney would be a natural term to apply to a Londoner leading an easy, idle life, and never troubling himself to go elsewhere. This comes very near to the popular idea of a Cockney, as a Londoner of the parochial type, with little or no idea of the country or the world outside of London.

Whatever the origin of the term, it is very commonly used in that sense, though when one speaks of a man as a Cockney there is a touch of contempt in it that does not belong to the term "Londoner." No one, indeed, is readier than the educated Londoner to joke about the amusing ignorance associated with the term "Cockney."

It was a Londoner who declared that, to the mass of his fellow citizens, everything outside of London (or at least of England) used to be conceived of as a vague region called "foreign parts," inhabited by an indistinct race called "natives." It was, he said, a step in advance when these "natives" came even to be subdivided into "Frenchmen" and "niggers." He was of opinion that the London shopkeeper who expected that a customer starting for the West Indies would be sure to see his brother, who had gone to the East Indies—across the road, as it were! probably represented the average geographical knowledge of the mass of stay-at-home Londoners fifty or sixty years ago.

It is told of a Cockney, who was on a visit for the first time to friends in Dublin, that, after seeing the sights, and when a jaunting car was engaged in Sackville Street, and he was driven some ten or eleven miles into the country, he exclaimed, "Well, well! I had no idea you had so much land in Ireland!"

I remember in London, in 1874, the year after the Shah of Persia's visit, and during the visit of the

Czar, a friend telling me that he heard two Cockneys conversing as they walked behind him near Charing Cross. "Haw," said one, "is this the Shar of Prussia, the one that was he-ah some while ago?" "No, no!" replied the other, "this is the Czar, the German Hemperor."

Another friend who was examining a class of boys, and who wished to illustrate one point with an incident from the life of Wellington, said he was going to tell them a story about a famous general, and he would like them to try and guess who the general was. Could they give him the name of any famous general who had won a very famous victory? No response. He gave two or three additional hints which he thought would be sure to suggest Wellington; he even mentioned "Waterloo," but still not a single boy could answer.

Then he said that the general had a very prominent nose—he was sure the boys must all of them have seen his picture.

At mention of the prominent nose a small boy at once jumped to his feet and held up his hand.

"Now," said the gentleman, with much gratification, "we are going to get this great man's name, and get it from one of the smallest boys in the class. I wonder that you bigger boys would allow yourselves to be out-stripped in knowledge by one so much younger than yourselves."

All the time he was speaking the small boy was snapping his fingers with increasing excitement till

he should be allowed to tell who the man with the nose was.

"Well," said the gentleman, "tell these bigger boys the name of this famous man."

"Ally Sloper!" shouted the small boy triumphantly.

I have heard of a Cockney, who was a great boaster about his "swell" acquaintances and his extensive travel—specially "this ye-ah," when he had been "down Palestine way, you know."

A friend who met him in company, and who was fond of a joke, said: "By the way, Stannery, did you see the Dardanelles when you were abroad this time?" "The—eh? The Dardanelles?" replied Stannery. "Oh ye—yes, yes! Jolly fellars as ever I met. Yes! dined with them at Viennar!"

The Cockney abroad has always been a favourite subject of caricature, both with pen and pencil.

A young couple, who were making their first acquaintance with France, arrived at their hotel in Paris, and asked about dinner. "*Table d'hôte* or *a la carte?*" inquired the waiter, politely. "O, let's have some of both," said 'Arry, "and (I say) put plenty of gravy on 'em!"

It is told of an ex-Lord Mayor of London that when touring in France he had his visiting cards inscribed, "Alderman W——, feu Lord Maire de Londres"—thinking "feu" (*late*, no doubt, but in the sense of *dead*) was the proper equivalent for "ex"—late though alive. It would be something

novel for his French friends to have a visit from a man who announced himself as detunet, as if the visit were from his ghost.

In a shop at Boulogne a young Cockney, who knew about half a dozen words in French, was airing his acquirements to the admiration of his friend Dobbins, who didn't speak the language. He thus addressed the shopkeeper:

"Ahem! Pardong, Mossoo! Esker vous avey—a—such a chose as a—a—une—Pot—a—that is, a—a—une Poe, you know, de—de—bear's grease: Comprenny?—bear's grease!"

Cleverer was the fellow-Cockney who, when he and his companion (who was equally innocent of French), had drained the teapot and wanted another supply, beckoned the waiter, and, pointing to the teapot said, "*Encore!* Teapot *encore!*"

Another young Cockney who was learning French, was travelling with a companion who spoke French like a native. The young Cockney, anxious to test himself, and perhaps show off his growing acquaintance with the language, said, one day to his friend at table, "Let me do the speaking to day." He took up the bill of fare, called the waiter, and told him in French *his* French what they wanted. The waiter, at each pause, said, "Oui, oui"; but when the young Cockney had completed his task, turned to the other gentleman and said (in French), "Kindly tell your friend that I do not understand English!"

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"*Encore*" Teapot *encore* *Encore*

Of the Cockney's amusing ignorance of Scotland and of Scottish manners and customs, numberless stories could be told. Even in the House of Commons it used to be said of the English members that the only thing they knew about Scotland was that the grouse shooting began on the 12th of August. The genuine Cockney should therefore be excused for a good deal of Egyptian darkness on the subject of Scottish ways.

I remember seeing in a London temperance magazine the following interesting note about Scotch porridge:—

"Although water is the most wholesome of all liquids, yet the following drinks are non-alcoholic and comparatively innocent—Scotch porridge, raspberry vinegar, soda and milk," etc.

From the inclusion of porridge in a list of temperance "drinks," along with raspberry vinegar, I concluded that the "halesome parritch" had never been before the editor's eyes except in print.

Campbell Rae-Brown writes a story about a "Cockney in Kilts," who thinks when setting out on his first tour to Scotland that he must array himself in the "Garb of Old Gaul" in order to be like the rest of the Scottish people, and who afterwards congratulates himself on having "done" the Highlands when he returns in safety from a sail down the Clyde from Glasgow to Dunoon and Rothesay.

The story does not go very far beyond the facts.

I remember when I first visited London as a boy, there was talk at the table one day about Scottish ministers and their pulpit robes. A gentleman who was present, on learning that my father was a minister, asked, with evident interest, "Then, does your father just wear his pulpit gown over his kilt?"

I remember a London lady, who, having visited the Highlands, was fond of airing her thorough knowledge of the Highland people and their ways, mentioning, amongst other things, that once on the pier at Oban she had seen Lord Archibald Campbell dressed in a beautiful "pibroch"! If this inspiring sound had really been all that his lordship wore, the sight of him in so airy a costume would have been sufficiently startling, not only to the lady, but to all who beheld the unwonted spectacle.

One of Charles Keene's inimitable pictures illustrates the story of an enthusiastic London Celt, who, on his way North by the night express, was regaling himself in his own compartment with some stirring airs on the pipes.

The sound was very audible in the next compartment, where a Cockney gentleman and his wife, who had never heard the bagpipes before, were vainly trying to get rest.

"Dear, dear, dear!" exclaimed the gentleman, innocently, as the strains of the bagpipe became more shrill than ever. "What a shame that they

didn't grease the wheels of these carriages! I can't get a wink of sleep." "It's simply awful!" groaned his wife. "The officials should really be reported to the Directors!"

A Presbyterian minister in London told me that when one of his people—a shopkeeper—was nominated for the eldership, he told the minister that it would be impossible for him to accept office, if he had to go to Edinburgh every year to the *Sanhedrim!*

When the Cockney finds himself in the country amongst the unfamiliar animals on a farm; or is taken by his friends fishing, boating, or deer-stalking, he is always an amusing object, giving people more enjoyment than enters into his purpose, especially if he tries to pass himself off as one to the manner born.

The story is told of a Cockney who liked to be thought an adept with the gun, but got an unanticipated "take-down" from a sportsman with whom he had been shooting all day, without bringing down a single bird to add to the rapidly filling bag. "Do you know Lord Peckham?" the sportsman happened to ask. "Oh, dear, yes," replied the Cockney amateur; "I've often shot at his country seat." "O, you have!" exclaimed the sportsman; "and did you ever hit it?"

In fiction, the pathetic side of Cockney ignorance of the country and of country life is drawn with wonderful power by Kingsley in his *Alton Locke*.

The funny side is nowhere more laughably given than by Dickens in his pictures of Mr. Winkle, when that verdant Pickwickian gets far away from the familiar life and ways of the city.

Who can forget the journey out to old Wardle's, and how Mr. Winkle, who has been allocated to the saddle, and does not like to confess that he has never been on horseback before, begins by attempting to mount on the wrong side of the horse; and, after the start, is observed holding the reins convulsively with both hands, while his hat is slipping back over his ears, and the horse, in a mysterious manner, is drifting sideway along the road.

Then, during the stay at Mr. Wardle's, there was the skating party.

"Now," said Wardle, "what do you say to an hour on the ice? We shall have plenty of time." "Capital!" said Mr. Benjamin Allen. "Prime!" ejaculated Mr. Bob Sawyer. "You skate, of course. Winkle?" said Wardle. "Ye—yes; oh yes!" replied Mr. Winkle, "but I—I am rather out of practice." "Oh, do skate, Mr. Winkle," said Arabella, "I like to see it so much." "Oh, it is so graceful," said another young lady. A third young lady said it was elegant; and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was "swan-like." "I should be very happy, I'm sure," said Mr. Winkle, reddening, "but—I have no skates." This objection was at once overruled. Wardle had a couple of pair: and the fat boy announced that there were half

a dozen more down stairs; whereat Mr. Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Mr. Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice; and the fat boy and Mr. Weller, having shovelled and swept away the snow which had fallen on it during the night, Mr. Bob Sawyer adjusted his skates with a dexterity which to Mr. Winkle, was perfectly marvellous, and described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eights.

All this time, Mr. Winkle, with his face and hands blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his feet, and putting his skates on, with the points behind, and getting the straps into a very complicated and entangled state, with the assistance of Mr. Snodgrass, who knew rather less about skates than a Hindoo.

At length, however, with the assistance of Mr. Weller, the unfortunate skates were firmly screwed and buckled on, and Mr. Winkle was raised to his feet. "Now then, sir," said Sam, in an encouraging tone, "off with you, and show 'em how to do it."

"Stop, Sam, stop!" said Mr. Winkle, trembling violently, and clutching hold of Sam's arms with the grasp of a drowning man. "How slippery it is, Sam."

"Not an uncommon thing upon ice, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Hold up, sir!"

This last observation of Mr. Weller's bore reference to a demonstration Mr. Winkle made at the

instant, of a frantic desire to throw his feet in the air, and dash the back of his head on the ice. "These—these are very akward skates; ain't they, Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, staggering. "I'm afeer'd there's an ork'ard gen'l'm'n in 'em, sir," replied Sam. "Now, Winkle!" cried Mr. Pickwick, quite unconscious that there was anything the matter, "come! the ladies are all anxiety." "Yes, yes," replied Mr. Winkle, with a ghastly smile; "I'm coming." "Just a-goin' to begin," said Sam, endeavouring to disengage himself. "Now, sir, start off!" "Stop an instant, Sam," gasped Mr. Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr. Weller. "I find I've got a couple of coats at home that I don't want, Sam. You may have them, Sam." "Thank'ee, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Never mind touching your hat, Sam," said Mr. Winkle, hastily. "You needn't take your hand away to do that. I meant to have given you five shillings for a Christmas box, Sam. I'll give it you this afternoon, Sam." "You're very good, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Just hold me at first, Sam: will you?" said Mr. Winkle. "There—that's right. I shall soon get in the way of it, Sam. Not too fast, Sam; not too fast."

Mr. Winkle, stooping forward with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr. Weller, in a very singular and un-swanlike manner, when Mr. Pickwick most innocently shouted from the

opposite bank: "Sam!" "Sir?" said Mr. Weller. "Here, I want you." "Let go, sir," said Sam: "don't you hear the governor a-callin'? Let go, sir." With a violent effort Mr. Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agonised Pickwickian, and, in so doing, administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr. Winkle.

With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have insured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into the centre of the reed, at the very moment when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and down they both came with a crash!

But if Cockneys furnish amusement with their ignorance in some directions, they are often witty enough and sharp enough in their own familiar sphere.

An unlicensed hawker, walking along by the kerb-stone, was pestering an irascible old gentleman to buy one of his combs.

"Buy a comb!" exclaimed the old gentleman, angrily, whipping off his hat and exposing a perfectly bald head. "What the deuce should I buy a comb for? You don't see any hair on my head, do you?" "Lor' bless yer, sir!" replied the dealer blandly; "yer don't want any 'air on yer 'ead for a tooth-comb!"

"What!" said a horse dealer to a probable

customer, "that little 'oss not jump! Why I put 'im in an empty seven-stall stable this mornin', and when I went to fetch 'im out, there 'e was a-'oppin' up and down over the pertitions just to amuse hisself like."

A lady was in a toy shop to buy a toy for her little darling, who could not decide between a Noah's Ark and a cheaper box of wooden animals.

"Which do *you* recommend, Mr. Smith?" she said to the shopkeeper.

"Well, mum," he replied on reflection, "you see, Noah bein' mentioned in 'oly writ, we always reckons the Hark 'as the advantage of bein' a Sunday toy, mum."

The London milkmen are sometimes suspected of using chalk to thicken their milk and give it a richer appearance. A cook, when the milkman made his usual call, complained of his milk, and showed him a jug of it that had been standing since the morning. "Look for yourself," she said, "there's not a particle of cream on the top." "My dear," said the milkman, "you'll find the cream at the bottom."

The average Cockney is a good-natured fellow, very willing to be amused; specially fond of being treated to transparent jokes, and with an exhilarating idea that he is something of a wit himself. His conception of fun is of a very rudimental type. On "Mafeking day," when London was delirious with joy, the favourite way of manifesting it in the

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"You see, Noah bein' mentioned in 'oly writ, we always reckons the Hark 'as the advantage of bein' a Sunday boy, mum." *Page* [illegible]

swarming streets was by the bashing of tall hats. At every performance the Cockneys yelled with delight.

I have often been amused to notice the kind of remark that seems funny to a Cockney. I remember finding that I had given exquisite enjoyment to one Cockney acquaintance by remarking that I was going to hunt up an old friend who was living at Peckham Rye. The idea that any person worth hunting up could be living at Peckham Rye was evidently ludicrous to him in the highest degree.

The Cockneys have a special weakness for punning. One specimen will suffice. Two of them engaged a waterman at Blackfriars Bridge to row them to the Tower. One of them asked the other if he could tell what countryman the boatman was. The other said he couldn't, but he should suppose him to be a Londoner. "I can tell you," said the first. "He's a *Ro*-man." "Oh! *wherry* good," replied the other.

Perhaps the best representatives of Cockney humour in literature are Sam Weller and Old Weller. But their humour is Cockney *plus* the keener wit of Dickens himself. A similar account might be truthfully given of a great deal of the Cockney humour, and the anecdotes told about Cockneys, by writers whose own cleverness communicates a smartness and polish that rarely belong to the humour one hears from Cockneys themselves.

For genuine Cockney humour one has to turn mainly to the London streets.

"Hansom to the opera, sir?" a cabman called to a lordly gentleman, who looked like a fare. "Hansom to the opera, sir?"

A sweep, who happened to be passing, and professed to regard the enquiry as addressed to him, replied, "Vell, not to-night, my tulip. I ain't cleaned up yet. But," he added, jerking his thumb towards the lordly gentleman, "'ere's a cove as is!"

A ragged boy came up with a doleful face to complain to a street hawker, that the sweets he had bought from him had made him ill.

"Made yer ill, 'ave they?" replied the hawker. "Then it's 'cos yer aint accustomed to 'igh livin'!"

Of small Cockneys, one of the most characteristic is the London shoeblack—always smart, often witty, sometimes impudent.

An elderly gentleman from Glasgow, when visiting London, was in doubt about his way to the Bank. He stopped at a shoeblack's stand, and said to the boy: "I say, my boy, I want to go to the Bank." "Vell, old cock," responded the boy, "who's a preventin' of you."

A distinguished volunteer, rifle in hand, was passing a shoeblack's stand. "Now capting," cried the boy, "clean yer boots for you;"—adding satirically when he saw that the distinguished volunteer was going past, "and let yer get a shot at me—all for the penny."

Another ragged urchin, when he saw a nobleman's gorgeously liveried lackey mounting the box behind the carriage, stepped forward as if he meditated a drive, and called out, "I say, coachee, are you engaged?"

An equally jocular and equally ragged urchin was standing on the ice with his companions when a lordly gentleman, with skates on apparently for the first time, came gliding helplessly up, doing his best, with body bent and arms outstretched, to preserve his balance. "Oh! yer wants to shake hands, do yer?" said the ragged urchin, holding out his own. "Werry glad to see yer, sir!"

"There's a penny for you, my lad," said a philanthropic old gentleman, to a ragged little crossing sweeper. "Now, what will you do with it?" "What!" cried the little fellow; "all this at once! I'll toss yer for it; double or quits!"

A lordly gent, walking on a windy day, with two young ladies, had his hat blown off.

"Here! Hi! Boy!" he cried to a small boy with a wheelbarrow. "Just wun and fetch my 'at; there's a good fellah."

"O yes; I dessay," replied the boy with a knowing wink. "An' you'll walk off with my barrer!"

A little chap was selling programmes outside a theatre door. "Twopence?" repeated a gentleman who had stopped to ask the price. "Twopence? Then I won't have one; I've only a penny!"

"Don't mention it, sir," replied the boy; "'ere you are. Never mind the hextra penny; I respects genteel poverty!"

A small bare-footed, bare-headed city arab was looking eagerly in at a pastry-cook's window, when a kind-hearted lady, observing him, said: "Could you eat one of those cakes, little boy?"

"Eat *one!*" exclaimed the little chap, "one o' them little jam things? Why, I'd eat six on 'em!"

A child was crying in a street near Charing Cross, when a compassionate lad, passing at the time, stopped and asked him what he was crying for. "'Cos I've lost a penny mother gave me."

"Ah, well, never mind," said the lady. "Here's another for you," and gave him one.

She had not gone much further, when she heard the little fellow bellowing more lustily even than before. Coming back to him, she asked what he was crying for now.

Whether it was the little fellow's game to make money by crying, or whether the lady's kindness had suddenly suggested to him that he had tapped a fountain that might be made something more of, he replied, "I'm cryin' 'cos if I 'adn't lost that there first penny, I should 'av 'ad tuppence!"

A very minute boy, bright as a button, applied for a place where a smart boy was wanted.

The merchant was taken with his appearance, so far as he was visible over the counter, but said, "Oh, my boy, you are a very little chap."

"Yes, sir," replied the boy; "but I'm all here!" And he was, and was there still when last heard of.

Sharp boys some of them are: not to be excelled even by their Yankee cousins. One came, in hot haste, into a merchant's office.

"Is the governor in?" he asked, breathlessly.

"Yes; what do you want?"

"Must see him myself, sir: most partic'lar."

"But you can't. He's engaged!"

"*Must* see 'im immediately: most partic'lar, sir!"

The boy's excitement and importunity got him in.

"Well, boy, what is it you want?" asked the merchant, seeing his eagerness.

"D'ye want an orffice boy, sir?"

"You impudent young rascal! No, we don't: we've got one."

"No, sir, you ain't. He's just this minute been run over in Cheapside. You'll want a new one, sir."

That boy was engaged. A boy who could take in the whole situation so smartly, when he saw the office boy run over, was not to be picked up every day.

The smart and cute little Cockney is found amongst the rich as well as amongst the poor. "Ah!" said little Bobbie, when sitting at the tea table with his parents, "when Bobbie's a big boy, and papa's a little boy, Bobbie 'll ask papa if he'll take a little more jam."

"Now, Tommy," said the careful aunt to a little boy, "I'll give you a sixpence if you promise never

to say that bad word again." When Tommy had given his promise and got the sixpence, he whispered to his aunt confidentially, "I say, auntie, I've got another word wuss than that—one worth half-a-crown."

Among the passengers in a Paddington omnibus was a small, but sharp-looking boy of five. As the omnibus was quite full, one of the gentlemen obligingly accommodated him on his knee. On the way, something was said about pickpockets, and soon the conversation became general on the subject. The gentleman who had the small boy on his knee said, by way of a joke, "My little fellow, how easily I could pick your pocket."

"No, you couldn't," replied the youngster, "I've been a-watching of you all the time!"

A little girl had come in from the closing examination at her school. "How is it, Alice," said her father, "that you never win a prize?" "While your friend, Louisa Sharp," added her mother, "gets so many?" "Ah! you forget," said Alice innocently, "that Louisa Sharp has got such clever parents."

"Uncle," said a cute little girl as she came up to him, carrying one of her dolls in her arms, and who had, no doubt, heard some conversations between her parents which she was not supposed to understand or be listening to, "uncle, have you made your will?" The startled old gentleman ejaculated, "Eh!" "'Cos," said the cute child, "I hope you haven't forgotten my dolls!"

"I say, auntie, I've got another word wuss than that—one worth half-a-crown." —*Page 200.*

Mrs. Whympton was fond of attending sales for bargains. When the nurse told her little boy, one day, that she thought his mother was going to buy a little baby to be a playmate for him, and when next day he was shown twins, he said, "Two! Mamma's lucky as usual, she's got a bargain!"

"Why is it," said his mother to little Willie, "that you always make so much noise in the house when your Aunt May comes to see us?" "'Cos, when I'm good," said little Willie, "she sings to me."

Some of the most characteristic specimens of Cockney humour are to be found amongst the London 'bus-drivers and conductors.

It was a 'bus-driver who called out to the fat old lady walking along the pavement on a hot day, "Let me cut off two penn'orth, mam!"

"Mile-End, sir?" shouted another to a heavy swell, who evidently wished to look as if it would be condescension in him to enter even a hansom cab. "Vitechapel or Mile-End, sir?"

The swell paid no attention, walking along in contemptuous silence. To whom the facetious conductor shouted by way of final appeal, "Deaf and Dumb 'Orspital, sir?"

A mild-looking gentleman, who had been carried past the street where he had asked to be let off, was goaded by his irritated wife to remonstrate. "Yes, I shall report you, sir, to your master, for not letting us down, as you were told, at the corner of——"

"Lor' bless your 'art, sir," replied the conductor, who had taken in the situation at a glance: "it aint my master as I'm afeer'd on. "I'm like you; it's my missus!"

"Sixpence!" exclaimed a solitary passenger on the top of a 'bus, when the conductor asked his fare. "*Sixpence!* why it's marked up threepence!"

"Yes, sir," said the conductor, cheerfully, but with perplexing volubility: "threepence when you don't get in between Charing Cross and the Bank, or Tuesdays to Mile End down to the gate by Ungerford, or Edgar Road to Black Lion Lane or Rothburn Place and Blackwall Railway; or else you must get out at St. Paul's Churchyard; or you can go to Pimlico; *otherwise* it's SIXPENCE!"

Very fond of quizzing one another and any passing friend these drivers are.

"'Ullo, 'Enery," cried one, pulling up to let a Foresters' procession pass, and grinning at his friend's costume. "Why, you are early this year! But *where's yer lantern?*"

Though this allusion to the 5th of November was delicately put, his Forester acquaintance did not seem to relish it.

On another occasion a driver pulled up while some militiamen were marching past.

A patriotic outsider, sitting beside the driver, exclaimed, with enthusiasm, "Splendid chaps them milisher—all of 'em tried men, too!"

To whom the driver, who was perhaps secretly

irritated because his sweetheart had fallen in love with one of them, replied, "Tried men? Ah, werry true. Them as aint been tried at the Hold Bailey as been tried at Clerkenwell!"

Between the drivers themselves there is often honest rivalry, and naturally enough their views of things take a professional tone.

"'Twas just here," said one of them to the passenger beside him, "at this 'ere near corner, a old gent was a-standin', an' a 'ansom come, an' the shaf' knock 'im down an' killed 'im on the spot: leastways he was took to the 'orspital." "Dear me! very sad!" said the passenger sympathetically. "Yes," said the driver, "an' wot was wuss, sir, he'd just 'ailed our 'bus!"

The London 'busmen—poor fellows—used to have an even harder time of it than they have now, being on their seat from early in the morning till midnight. There was pathos, as well as grim humour, in the reply of one who had lost his situation, and was asked by a friend who met him what he was doing now. "I'm makin' the acquaintance," he said, "of my wife and children."

The Cockney cabby is quite equal to his cousin on the 'bus, and can be especially cutting when disappointed with his fare.

"Oh, pray, step in again, sir!" said one to a gentleman from whom he had expected eightpence or at least a few coppers extra but who handed him the legal shilling in a style that implied finality

"Oh, step in again, sir! vy, I could ha' druv you five an' a 'arf yards further for this 'ere!"

"Ah!" said another, on receiving his legal fare from Temple Bar to Furnival's Inn, "I only vish sixpences was as scarce as gen'lmen."

Said another, who had got the exact shilling for a good shilling's worth: "If I had laid out my money, sir, all my life, as well as you've laid out this 'ere shillin', I should 'a been a rich man to-day."

More cheerful was the response of the cabby who, when a clerical fare, on alighting from his cab, said: "Well, my friend, how much shall I ——?" interrupted the enquiry with, "Vell, sir, my bare fare's eighteenpence; but as it's 'friends'—what shall we say—half-a-crown?"

The cabman has seen a good deal of human nature, and knows how to turn his knowledge to account. A stout lady, evidently of the wealthy sort, and with a serious air suggestive of prayer meetings and piety, was giving directions to the cabman where to take her. "You turn off," she said, "just beyond the Red Lion."

The cabman looked serious and perplexed.

"Don't you know the Red Lion?" asked the lady.

"Could you not tell me, ma'am, what's the nearest church or chapel to that 'ere road?"

Evidently gratified to find a cabman so much better acquainted with churches than with public-houses, she told him; and when she got out, gave the excellent man an extra shilling.

A lady, who had not been over-liberal with the fare, said: "Now, cabman, you'll take my boxes up the garden, please."

To whom the cabman replied with satirical cheerfulness: "Certainly, ma'am, if you'll 'old my 'oss."

An amateur artist took a cab to carry a little picture of his to a friend's house. The cabman, on getting his fare, cast a reproachful look on him, and sat with the money in his open palm.

"Well, it's your right fare," said the amateur; "you know that as well as I do!"

"Which I'm well aware o' that, sir," said the man. "But," he added, more in sorrow than in anger, "an' you an artist, sir!"

That went home. He got sixpence extra.

Equal in strategy was the cabman who on setting down Mr. and Mrs. Spriggles and baby, said his fare was half-a-crown.

"Half-a-crown? How do you make that out?" exclaimed Mr. Spriggles. "Why, it's under four miles. You don't reckon anything for this baby, I hope?" referring to the chubby little child in Mrs Spriggles' arms.

Looking with beaming face on the baby, the cabman replied tenderly, "Ah, I dessay you and your good lady don't reckon no'thing on 'im neither, bless 'is little 'eart!"

Mr. and Mrs. Spriggles looked at the little darling, and then at one another, and the cabman went away happy with his half crown.

There are other classes and types of character amongst the cockneys very amusing in their own way. One variety is the heavy swell who is faultlessly dressed, is more afraid of a speck on his dress coat than on his character, and regards himself, when he walks out in the Park, as the cynosure of all eyes.

"Have you got twopence, sir?" said a railway clerk to one who had got a one-and-twopenny ticket, and had handed in a florin: "Have you got twopence, sir." Swell: "Deah, no! nevah had twopence in my life." Clerk: "Then I must give you tenpence in copper, sir." The swell's delight may be imagined.

"They're 'ansome," said another, after seeing some Swiss falls. "But they don't quite hanswer my ideas. I got dripping vet, and lost my 'at. I prefer looking at 'em in a pictyah, and in the 'ouse."

Few thing are more characteristic of London than the great gormandizing and guzzling dinners given by City Companies. Thackeray satirises them inimitably in his account of the banquet of the Worshipful Company of Bellows-Menders, at their splended hall in Marrow-pudding Lane. The reception is described; the mighty dinner is described; and the conversation, which befitted the occasion and the supreme business of eating and drinking that went on all round.

"Waiter, where's the turtle-fins?"—Gobble, gobble. "Hice punch, or 'My deary,' sir?" "Smelts or salmon, Jowler, my boy?" "Always take cold beef after turtle"—Gobble, gobble. "These year peas have no taste." Gobble, gobbleobble. "Jones, a glass of 'ock with you? Smith jine us? Waiter, three 'ocks." "S. mind your manners. There's Mrs. S. a looking at you from the gallery." Gobble-obbl-gobble-gob-gob-gob. A steam of meats, a flare of candles, a rushing to and fro of waiters, a ceaseless clinking of glass and steel, a dizzy mist of gluttony, out of which I see my old friend of the turtle soup making terrific play among the peas, his knife darting down his throat. . . . .

Dinner over, and the diners full of fat venison and Bacchus, grace (much needed) was said, and the oratory began.

First the Warden of the Worshipful Society of the Bellows-Menders proposed "Her Majesty," in a reverential voice. We all stood up respectfully, Chisel yelling out to us to "Charge our glasses." The Royal health having been imbibed, the professional gentlemen in the gallery—the well-known melodists, Mr. Shadrach, Mr. Meshech, and Jack Oldboy—ejaculated a part of the National Anthem.

"His Royal Highness Albert Prince of Wales, and the rest of the Royal Family," followed. Chisel yelling out the august titles, and all of us banging away with our glasses as if we were seriously interested in drinking healths to this Royal race, as if drinking healths could do anybody any good, as if the imprecations of a company of bellows menders, aldermen, magistrates, tailors, authors, tradesmen, and ambassadors, who did not care a twopenny piece for all the Royal families in Europe, could somehow

affect their Royal Highnesses by their tipsy vows, under the presidency of Mr. Chisel.

Chisel bellowed out another toast—"The Army"; and we were silent in admiration, while Sir George Bluff, the greatest General present, rose to return thanks.

Our end of the table was far removed from the thick of the affair, and we only heard, as it were, the indistinct cannonading of the General, whose force had just advanced into action. We saw an old gentleman with white whiskers, and a flaring scarlet coat covered with stars and gilding, rise up with a frightened and desperate look, and declare that "this was the proudest—a hem—moment of his his—a-hem—unworthy as he was—a-hem—as a member of the British—a-hem—who had fought under the illustrious duke of—a-hem—his joy was to come amongst the Bellows-Menders—a-hem—and inform the great merchants of the greatest city of the—hum—that a British—a-hem—was always ready to do his hum. Napoleon—Salamanca—a-hem—had witnessed their—hum, haw—and should any other—hum—occasion, which he deeply deprecated—haw—there were men now around him—a-haw—who, inspired by the Bellows-Menders' Company and the City of London—a-hum—would do their duty as—a-hum—a-haw—a-hah."

Immense cheers, yells, hurrays, roars, glass smackings, and applause followed this harangue, at the end of which the three Israelites, encouraged by Chisel, began a military cantata. "O the sword and the shield on the battlefield, are the joys that best we love, boys; when the grenadiers, with their pikes and spears, thro' the ranks of the foemen shove, boys. Where the bold hurray strikes dread

dismay in the ranks of the dead and dyin'; and the bayonet clanks in the Frenchmen's ranks, as they fly from the British Lion."

Then the Secretary of the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office rose to return thanks for the blessings which we begged upon the Ministry. He was, he said, but a humble—the humblest member of that body. The suffrages that body had received from the nation were gratifying, but the most gratifying testimonial of all, was the approval of the Bellows-Menders' Company. Yes, the thanks and pride that were boiling with emotion in his bosom, trembled to find utterance at his lip. Yes, the proudest moment of his life, the crown of his ambition, the meed of his early hopes and struggles and aspirations, was at that moment won in the approbation of the Bellows-Menders. Yes, his children should know that he too had attended at those great, those noble, those joyous, those ancient festivals, and that he, too, the humble individual who from his heart pledged the assembled company in a bumper that he too was a Bellows-Mender. (Immense applause.)

Thackeray has mercilessly pourtrayed the Cockney snob in his many varieties—the snob royal, the military snob, the clerical snob, the club snob, the literary snob, and the snobbish toadyism to wealth and rank which is not confined to Cockaigne. Here is one characteristic extract:—

All English society is cursed by the mammoniacal superstition, and we are sneaking and bowing and cringing on the one hand, or bullying and

beggar, who pleads with sacred names and pious phrases, but has a volley of curses to fire after you if you give him (or her) nothing. There is also the silent beggar, constitutionally thin and sickly-looking, and dressed in seedy black, who takes up his position, not on the pavement (he is too modest for that), but in the road, at the edge of the kerbstone, where he stands in melancholy silence, stooping a little as if from combined weakness and humility, his sorrowful eyes bent upon the pavement, and his thin hand holding out, in mute appeal, a lucifer-match box, or a thin account-book with two or three lead pencils or sticks of sealing-wax, supposed to be offered for sale. The silent beggar "fetches" people who are only repelled by the sturdy, clamorous beggar. I remember the case of one, reported in the London papers, who, being of a thrifty, perhaps a miserly turn, died worth nearly £800.

Other members of the begging fraternity trade successfully on the want of an arm or leg, or on blindness—real or affected. I heard of one such beggar who was standing by the pavement with a board hung on his breast—"Pity a poor blind man." A suspicious passer-by held out towards him a florin, which he immediately clutched at.

"I see you are not so blind after all," said the gentleman. "Who said I was blind?" asked the man." "That board of yours says it." "They've given me the wrong board," said the man, looking at it. "It should have been 'Deaf and Dumb.'"

A familiar Cockney character is the policeman, with his friend the cook, who has always something nice for him in the kitchen. The detective from Scotland yard is a higher type of the force, but he also has his Cockney weaknesses and peculiarities.

Here is Mr. Punch's selection from

A Detective's Diary.

"April 1.—Received intelligence of an audacious burglary, with violence, at Walker's Green. Consulted Inspector Watcher. Hired a cab, and in company with Sergeant Dodgett, had a pleasant drive to Walker's Green. Amusing fellow, Dodgett. Arrived and looked over the premises. Good sherry. Mary Ann, the cook, much frightened. Comforted her officially. Housemaid just recovering from the effects of a blow from a life preserver. Lady of the house had been very roughly handled; asked our opinion. We informed her that we were certain that there had been a burglary with violence. She thanked us for the information. Received a couple of sovereigns. Drove back to town. Pleasant day. Saw the inspector in the evening; informed him that Dodgett and myself were sure that an audacious robbery with violence had been committed at Walker's Green.

"April 2.—Prosecuted our enquiries vigorously. Drove with Sergeant Dodgett to Walker's Green. Observed something that had escaped our notice yesterday. Two large panels had been cut out of the front door, leaving an aperture of about three feet square. Measured it carefully with a piece of red tape. A man's head might have passed through

it. Housemaid still suffering, but able to speak to Dodgett. Sharp fellow, Dodgett. The girl's arm is much swollen; and the mistress's head still bound up. We are both of opinion that violence must have been used.

"April 3.—Walker's Green. Good sherry and refreshments. Lady of the house said that one of the burglars had light hair, and was about five feet eight inches. We are on the track. Mary Anne, the cook, hoped I wouldn't get into danger. Charlotte, the housemaid, looked hard at Dodgett. Returning to town we saw a man answering to the description. Arrested him. Measured his head with the red tape. Locked him up.

"April 4.—Man examined. Said he had not done it. Asked him how it was he came to have light hair and be five feet eight? Was confused. Found out that he had only just arrived from Birmingham, where he had lived all his life. Cautioned and discharged him.

"April 5.—Saw a man in the street—very tall and dark haired. Dodgett said that was his cunning. Took him up. Asked him why he hadn't light hair, and why he wasn't five feet eight inches? He was dumbfounded. Turned out to be Inspector Watcher's father-in-law. Apologised and discharged him.

April 6.—Got him at last! Highly complimented on our sagacity by every one. Wrote to Mary Anne how we were getting on. Man confessed to the burglary and was locked up.

"April 7.—Man who said he did it, now says he didn't. Had too much drink—very sorry. Reprimanded and discharged. Letter from Mary Anne,

saying that her mistress would be out to-morrow, and that we must come down as she and Charlotte had made a discovery.

"April 8, 9, 10.—Called every day at Walker's Green. See no reason to alter our opinion that an audacious burglary had been committed with violence. Charlotte said she'd got something to tell Dodgett. Sly dog, Dodgett. Mary Anne communicated her discovery to me. Nice girl, with considerable savings. Inspector requested us to report progress. Did so; and assured him that we had now no doubt as to the perpetration of a burglary, most audacious, with violence, at Walker's Green. Arrested several people during the remainder of the month—measured all their heads with the red tape—cautioned and discharged them.

"May. On the first of this month, Charlotte will become Mrs. Dodgett. After information received from me, Mary Anne accepts my hand."

A Cockney culprit—who was "all there," as the Yankees would say—was tried before a London magistrate and convicted.

The magistrate, who was given to indulge in occasional colloquialisms, even on the bench, said, "My man, you are fined ten bob."

"Thank you worship," said the man, cheerfully. "There aint no such legal coin as a 'bob'; so it can't be legally paid. So, thanking your worship again, I shall just walk off!" And he did walk off, leaving the magistrate (if he was wise) to profit by the lesson in his after judgments.

It is told of a smart and gentlemanly-looking thief, who seemed to be interested in the statue of Victory in Trafalgar Square, that he asked one or two questions about it of a stranger who was also looking at it, ending with taking a pinch of snuff and offering one to the other. The gentleman (who was not without his suspicions) declined, saying he was not a snuff-taker—which was a fib. On his way home he missed his own snuff-box—in place of which he found a bit of paper, on which was scribbled the words: "As you don't take snuff, you can have no need of a snuff-box."

There is a touch of humour, mingled with grimness and pathos, in some of the experiences of a London Thieves' Missionary amongst his felonious flock. I remember, many years ago, accompanying the Rev. Mr. M'Cree, thieves' missionary at that time, through the thieves' district near Drury Lane. It was night, and as we entered the district many of the pickpockets, and probably burglars, were setting out on their predatory excursions. Mr. M'Cree spoke to several of them, for the most part about sick relatives or friends whom he had been visiting. He was known to most of them, and held in great respect, and his kindness was highly appreciated. One man, to whom he spoke when I was with him, said his pal wanted very much to see him again, and was very thankful for the visit he had got from him. Mr. M'Cree said the "pal" was a notorious burglar who had got himself badly hurt by a fall when

escaping from a house into which he had broken. The thieves' district, he said, was a dangerous one, and some of the thieves were desperate characters, but they knew his object; knew that he would not peach upon them; knew that he was always ready to do them kindness. They were often impatient under his remonstrances and his attempts to get them to give up their way of life; but, knowing that he was a true and genuine friend, they never went further when they were sober, and, if drunk, were kept from doing him injury by their fellow-thieves. Often, indeed, he was offered presents by men and women whom he had helped in trouble, but as he knew that most of the things were stolen goods he never accepted them.

Once, however, he accepted a pair of gloves, because they were his own. He had been speaking to some acquaintance in the street one night when he felt a movement at his coat-tail, and found, on feeling his pocket, that his gloves had been stolen. A few nights after, when in the thieves' district, a young fellow came up to him, touched his hat, and handed his gloves back, apologising very earnestly for stealing them. He said he was new to the district, and did not know that *he* was Mr. M'Cree, their missionary, or he would never have done such a thing.

It is curious to observe the touch of humour there is, here and there, in the professional language of the London thief. Altering the name of a watch is

called "christening a jack"; one who steals while bargaining with a shopkeeper is called "a bouncer"; a stealer of lead pipes is called "a blue pigeon-flyer"; entering a dwelling during divine service is called "dead lurk"; the trainer of young thieves is called "a kidsman"; plunderers of drunken men are called "bog-hunters"; men who rob children are called "kinchen coves"; wrenching off knockers is called "drawing teeth"; being hanged is spoken of as "dying in shoes."

London, and the condition and modes of life in it, have changed so much within the past century, and even within the memory of living men, that it becomes almost ludicrous to look back and compare the former state of things with the present.

Here are a few sentences from the reminiscences of a Scot who visited London in the year 1800:—

Landed at a wharf at Wapping, and drove in a hackney coach at the rate of three and a half miles an hour to lodgings for single gentlemen in a street out of the Strand.

First day.—Awakened in the morning by a sharp clicking noise in the room resembling the cocking of a pistol. My first thought was of London robbers, but I found the noise was occasioned by the efforts of the maid in striking a light, the tinder being wet, and her knuckles injured at times by a miss between flint and steel. There were no lucifer matches in those days.

Breakfast.—Complained of the coarseness and staleness of the bread, and learnt that no bread was

allowed to be sold until after it had been baked twenty four hours, under a penalty of five pounds for every loaf, and that white bread was altogether prohibited: the Lord Mayor setting the Assize only for brown, which this week has risen to nearly two shillings a loaf, to the great distress of the poor and middling classes.

Before going forth for a stroll, wrote a letter home to announce my safe arrival. Lighting a candle and sealing with wax was five minutes' operation. No envelope to shut up with a lick; no sovereign's head to stick on; no penny-wise process of postage. Thirteen pennies had to be paid for the same letter on delivery. There was only one general post office in a lane out of Lombard Street for the whole business and population of London. Connected with this subject of private correspondence, there was an everlasting worry to get franks from Members of Parliament to save pence and look consequential; the trouble of which, to seekers and granters, was past conception.

Some of the city taverns were favourite resorts for literary men in the days of the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, and down through the days of Johnson and Goldsmith, to the time when the tavern gave place to the club.*

* The amusing ignorance of some Cockneys is not confined to things outside of London. A gentleman who visited the Old Cock, which Samuel Johnson frequented, said, "The waiter assured me that he remembered Johnson very well, and pointed out the box in which he used to sit. As the waiter was under forty years of age, and Johnson has been dead for nearly ninety years, the waiter's information must have been on a par with that of the other Cockney who said he knew Gulliver, and that he lived in Wapping."

When the shades of night descended on the city there was nothing in those days to guide any one through the darkness but dim oil lamps, which only made the darkness visible. The shops with their tallow dips were almost as dark as the streets.

When the shops and theatres were all closed and the city had gone to rest, the streets and the dwellings of the inhabitants were watched after a fashion by a race of decrepit old men, known by the *soubriquet* as "Charlies," the predecessors of the "Peelers" and "Bobbies" of more recent times. These "Charlies," when awake themselves, kept other folk awake by bawling out at the pitch of their voices the hours and half-hours that passed till dawn, and what the weather was abroad, whether cloudy, rainy, frosty, or fine. They were armed with rattles to call attention or give alarm, and carried lanterns like glowworms to help them in picking their steps through the pitch darkness.

By day at that time the streets of London were crowded with dogs harnessed to the carts and barrows of bakers, butchers, costermongers, fruit sellers, travelling tradesmen, and razor-grinders. It was no uncommon thing on a Sunday to meet whole families starting off to the country in dog-drawn carriages, returning in the evening, often at full gallop, and uproarious under the influence of drink. This use, and often abuse, of dogs was at last forbidden by Act of Parliament.

Great amusement was caused on the day when the

Act was passed by the appearance of a cartoon representing the dogs in council—the president, a mastiff, reading the Act, while a terrier stood ready, document in paw, to move a vote of thanks to Mr. Hawes, who had introduced the bill. In the distance, a procession of costermongers, etc., were seen drawing their own carts, while the emancipated dogs were looking on and laughing at them. The bill, however, in its operation, proved no laughing matter to the dogs. No sooner was it put in force than thousands of them were put to death to save the expense of their maintenance, which they were no longer allowed to earn. In a few days the whole breed of draught dogs, fostered for draught purposes alone, became nearly extinct in London.

It is amusing to observe in London, as elsewhere, the transformation that Names undergo—generally in the way of being turned into forms that are easier to pronounce, or into familiar expressions which the originals, by their sound, have suggested. Dean Trench, in one of his books, refers to the change (amongst the sailors) of the British warship's name, *Bellerophon*, into Billy Ruffian. I remember seeing in a book on Old Public-house Signs, how the pious motto, "God encompasseth us," had become metamorphosed into "Goat and Compasses," and was anchored to this form by the picture of a goat with a pair of compasses over its back, which dangled over the doorway.

London names abound in similar odd transformations. Deadman's Place was originally Desmond Place; Gutter Lane was originally Gatherum Lane; Tripe Court was originally Strypes Court—named after the historian of that name; while Tooley Street was originally St. Olave's.

Modern changes have, in many cases, moved in the opposite direction, substituting genteel names for streets and lanes, that in old days bore titles, more remarkable for their vivid realism than for their elegance. Knave's Acre has been turned into Poultney Street; Pedlar's Acre into Belvidere Road; Duck Lane into Duke Street; Dirty Street into Abingdon Street; and Stinking Lane into King Edward Street.

There are some Cockney peculiarities of speech that are very funny.

The dropping of the letter "H" from where it ought to be, and the introduction of it where it ought not to be, is not peculiar to Cockaigne, but is probably more conspicuous there than in any other part of England.

"Now, children," said a London Sunday School teacher, "I've given you hall a chance to spell 'Solomon,' and you can't. Now, I'll spell it for you; and see that you are able to spell it correctly next time. Now please, pay attention! You spell Solomon with a Hess, and a Ho, and a Hell, and a Ho, and a Hem, and a Ho, and a Hen."

A Glasgow cyclist, stopping at the door of a

little inn in the outskirts of London, asked the landlord if he could get an egg. "A what, sir?" "An egg."

The landlord turned and asked the waiter if he knew what a "negg" was.

"Yes, sir; a nag is a little hoss, sir!"

"Perhaps," said a man, who was standing near filling his pipe, "perhaps the gentleman means a hegg."

A young lady visiting the Zoological Gardens with her mother, exclaimed, "La, ma! here's a heagle!" "A heagle!" replied the mother reproachfully. "Oh, you hignorant girl; why, it's a howl!" To whom the keeper of the menagerie remarked respectfully, "Axes parding, mum: it's a nawk."

"It's not the 'unting that 'urts the 'orse," said a philosophic hostler; "it's the 'ammering, 'ammering, 'ammering, over a 'ard 'ighway. It 'urts 'is 'ooves. When yor're not a-going to 'unt, 'ire a 'ack, and 'ammer along with 'im."

Parlourmaid to Buttons: "You vulgar boy! you should never say 'Ax'; you should say 'Harsk'!"

Once, when a visitation of cholera was threatened in London, a barber remarked to the gentleman whom he was engaged in cropping: "They say there's cholera in the hair, sir." "Then I hope," said the gentleman, "you're very particular about the brushes you use." "Oh, you mistake me, sir!"

replied the barber, "it's not the 'air of the 'ed, but the hair of the hatmosphere."

A London furnace-builder said to a friend whom he met on arriving in Glasgow: "I've come to try and get the contract for 'eating the Custom 'ouse."

"Well," said his friend, "if you have to *eat* our Custom House, you'll want a good digestion."

George Augustus Sala once made a sharp retort on a rough tobacco-chewing storekeeper in a western town, who said, after a preliminary squirt, that he never conversed with a Cockney without looking afterwards on the floor for the "h's" he had dropped. Sala retorted that the task must sometimes be disagreeable if the "h's" had dropped into any of the pools of tobacco-juice he saw on the floor.

Here is what has been called "A Henglish Henigma," which must, says the author, be "hevident to hall heyes"—

Hi dwells in the Hurth, and Hi breathes hin the Hair;
Hif you searches the Hocean you'll find Hi am there.
The first of hall Hangels in Holympus am Hi,
Yet Hi'am banished from 'Eaven—expelled from hon 'Igh.
But tho' on this Horb Hi am destined to grovel,
Hi am seen in no 'Ouse, nor in 'Ut, nor in 'Ovel.
Not an 'Oss, nor an 'Unter, e'er bear me, halas!
But oft ham Hi found on the top of a Hass.
Hi reside in a Hattic, Hi love not to roam;
Yet ham Hi hinvariably Habsent from 'Ome.
Hi ham never in 'Ealth; 'ave with physic no power;
Hi die hin a minute, but cum back hin a Hour.

Odd pronunciations are not confined to the use or abuse of the letter "H."

An Elgin man was in London as one of a deputation in connection with the promotion of a bill for the Elgin and Craigellachie Railway.

He spent all day in the House of Commons, but, on returning to the hotel, said to the other members of the deputation, "So our job didn't come on to day." "It did that, and it's over," said they.

It turned out that the Clerk had read the names, "Heljinn and Craigelatchy," under which title the Elgin man had failed to recognize them.

An English minister, who was "supplying," for several weeks, the place of a Scottish friend, thought it would be the correct thing to have a Burns' Lecture on the poet's anniversary day. Some of his pronunciations were refreshingly original. He spoke of "A man's a man for *aa* that," and said the organist would now play "Scots wha *high*." After all, he was not so far astray as a Harvard professor whom I met in Longfellow's house in 1867, who said that though he was an American it stirred his soul to hear Burns' glorious song, "Scots *whaa haw*"!

Another peculiarity of Cockney speech is the habit of pronouncing V "we" and we "V." Vinegar is "winegar," but window is "vinder."

Every reader will remember how, in the immortal trial of Bardell *v.* Pickwick, when the Judge asked Sam Weller whether he spelt his name with a "V"

or a "W," Sam's reply was followed by a voice from the gallery, where old Weller had found a seat, "Put it down with a 'We,' my lord; put it down with a 'We'!"

A story is told of Queen Victoria when, in the beginning of her reign, she paid her first visit to the Mansion House. Seeing the great crowd, she turned to Lord Albemarle, Master of the Horse, and said: "I wonder if my good people of London are as glad to see me as I am to see them?"

The Earl wittily replied, as he pointed to the "V.R." woven into all the decorations: "Your Majesty can see their loyal answer in Cockney form—'Ve are'!"

WELSH HUMOUR

WELSH HUMOUR

AMONGST the features that strike a stranger in Wales are the sprightliness, volubility, and great natural eloquence of the Welsh people. Their eloquence shews itself most in their native tongue, but it also makes itself felt in English. Wales has given pulpit orators to Nonconformist Churches in England, and (in men like Lloyd George) has given orators and wits to the British Parliament.

In Wales itself, an important part in the national life is played by the native preachers, most of them Calvinistic Methodists. The Welsh people have long been noted for their interest in whatever concerns religion: and in almost every smithy and shop and social gathering in the Principality, the commonest topic of conversation and discussion is what has been going on at their religious services, and what has been said by their favourite ministers. Even in the market-place, one can hear religious talk mingling with the chatter about the quality and prices of the things offered for sale; talk that, amongst those who have done their business, soon developes into voluble and often excited discussions over the merits or defects of their different ministers and class leaders.

The pulpit orators of Wales whose names have been most widely known—men like Daniel Rowlands, Christmas Evans, and John Elias—were men whose preaching was characterised by its great impressiveness and solemnity as well as by its flights of fiery eloquence, characteristic specimens of which are given by Owen Jones in his *Great Preachers of Wales.*

But there have also been some who are likely to be longer remembered for their humorous than for their graver utterances. One of these was Stephen Jenkins of Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire. Stephen was reared in poverty and got very little schooling, being taken away to work in the quarries before he was twelve years of age. He got his best education in the Sunday School, and made such good use of it that he rose rapidly from being a scholar to being a teacher, then an examiner in Scripture knowledge, then a Catechist, and finally a Methodist preacher, and one of the most popular preachers in Pembrokeshire. His lack of education showed itself from first to last, but his preaching was full of power and pathos; his vivid pictures appealed to the hearts as well as to the imaginations of his hearers; and though they were given forth with little regard to orthodox pronunciation or grammar, and sometimes abounded in ludicrous anachronisms, they never on that account lost anything of their telling effect upon the plain and earnest people who everywhere crowded eagerly to hear him.

The *Twentieth Century New Testament* has done

a good deal in the way of modernising for us the language of Scripture, but Stephen Jenkins was not only before it, he went a good deal beyond it. He rehearsed the most ancient narratives in the most modern of phraseology, dressing the old stories in the newest fashions, quite unconscious apparently of the frequently incongruous and ludicrous effect. He spoke of "The Mayor of Mesopotamia," "the Squire of Padanarum," and "the Marquis of Galilee," and described the Roman guard at the tomb of Jesus as "the sowldyers in their red coats."

Stephen Jenkins had no more doubt than Martin Luther about the personality of the devil. Speaking at the close of a temperance mission which had wrought a wonderful reformation in the drinking habits of the town, he said:—"I remember years ago, ould Satan could be seen a-marchin' up and down the town here with his top-coat on, and saying about the people and the houses, 'All these belongs to me.' But after these meetings ya could have seen 'im slinkin' away up Pren'gaet Hill like a beaten dog!"

In rehearsing the story of the Prodigal Son, he said, after telling about the younger son asking for his share of the property:—"So then was a big sal' on the farm. And when the youngest boy had his money, ha went to the draper's shop, and bought a suit of the best Scotch twade, and a silk bell topper, and brown kid gloves, and a Gladstone bag. And ha went away in his carriage and pair to a far

country, and put up in the biggest hotel in the city. And, thar, all the *nobs and swells* cam' to 'm; and ha was a tr'ating them all round with whiskey, and brandy, and wine. He had plenty of companions. Ay, ay, my friends, you can have plenty of companions so long as y'ave plenty of money; but when the money goes, the companions goes, too. So it was with the Prodigal Son."

When telling on one occasion the story of Noah and the flood, he spoke of the people's incredulity till the time was at hand and ominous signs appeared, and animals began to make their way in pairs to Noah's shipbuilding yard. Then he repeated some of the remarks supposed to be made by people talking to one another. One carpenter is heard saying to his boon companions: "I could tell ya another strange thing that I noticed this morning, on my way here, only I'm afraid that you'll only laugh at me." "No, no," said they, "we won't laugh; tell us what ya did see." "Well," said he, "this morning, on my way here, I met two big lions walking together as fast as they could, and they passed close by me, without taking any notice of me! and I met two tigers in the same way; and then two bears. But what mad' me wonder most of all, was that they was all going in the direction of ould Noah's ark."

Like other quaint preachers, Stephen Jenkins could wax eloquent over Jonah's adventures. The Higher Criticism, if it ever came near him, had no

more effect on Stephen than rain on a duck's back. In commencing a sermon on the prophet, he said:—"Jonah was a noted pracher in many ways. And one thing ha was specially noted for was that ha was the only pracher that ever went into a whal's belly and came out alive. The whal's belly was Jonah's college, where ha larned more in three days than the students in Trevecca larn in three years." He went on to describe Jonah as an "*inside passenger*," and added that the reason why the Lord caused the whale to swallow Jonah, and not make it carry him as an "*outside passenger* on its back was that, bad as Jonah was, *the Lord was not wanting to mak a jockey of him.*"

Sometimes even in prayer, the quaint humour would burst out unconsciously. At one meeting, during an exceptionally rainy season, he cried, "The rain, O Lord, is Thy child, and ha's making gr'at havocs in our hay-fields and our corn-fields; we would be very thankful to Thee if Thou wouldst be kind enough to keep him indoors for a bit!"

On another occasion, when the spring was exceptionally late and exceptionally dry, but when at last the first welcome showers came down, his thankfulness expressed itself thus in his prayer at the public service: "Father in heaven, Thou art very good to us, giving us great blessings, temporal and spiritual. A few days ago, we was murmuring and fearing that we should have no hay nor corn in our fields. Then didst Thou come in the night, with Thy great

watering-pot in Thy hand, all through the land, and now it looks beautiful, and the buds and the flowers are looking up to Thee, and a-praising Thy goodness!"

His illustrations were often very homely, but very striking, and well fitted to come home to the hearts of the people who were listening to him. Once, in illustrating the words in Psalm civ. 28, "Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good," he remarked, "I dar' say ya've noticed the farmer's wife coming out of the house in the morning, with a big apron full of corn, to feed the fowls. She don't need to call them, they knows the step of her foot, and the sound of her clogs; and they knows the ould apron a long way off. And thar they comes to her from every place. The ould gander leads the geese and all the little goslings to her, and the ould hens tak's their little chicks to her, and the ducks and the toorkies hurries to her with their young uns. Then she puts her hand into the ould apron, and throws a handful here and a handful thar, this way and that way, till they are all satisfied. So our heavenly Father opens His gr'at hand, and throws His gr'at blessings this way to the north, that way to the south, this way to the east, and that way to the west, and thus fills a world full of people and creatures every morning. 'Thou openest thine hand, and they are filled.'"

His lack of education made some scripture verses difficult for him to get through. Once, in reading

the third chapter of Daniel, in which the list of musical instruments is four times rehearsed, it was with manifest difficulty and not with conspicuous success that he read the words: "At what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music," etc. The second time he came to the verse he stumbled through it with even greater difficulty than at first. But before he reached it again he had discovered a way of escape. So the third and fourth time he relieved both himself and his listeners by reading with the utmost gravity, "And the band played as before!"

His remarks were sometimes as shrewd and pithy as they were pictorial. On one occasion he described prejudice as "trying to put water into a bottle with a cork in it. Tak' the cork out with the corkscrew of brotherly love," he said, "and you can fill the bottle 'asy enough."

His congregation and all who knew him not only loved him for his goodness, and admired him for his eloquence, but delighted in his quaint humour, and felt as if he could not be the real Stephen Jenkins without it. Hence the verse in a tribute to his memory written at his death:—

> Humorous Stephen! Oft we wonder
> If thou give the angels mirth,
> As, with wit without one blunder,
> Thou relatest scenes of earth!

Didst thou leave thy terse expressions
At this side "ould Jordan's" brink?—
That they're still thy rare possessions,
We, below, delight to think.*

The Welsh being endowed, as a people, with a great gift of spontaneous utterance, it is not to be wondered at that their preachers, as a rule, eschew the use of manuscript in the pulpit. One of their fervid orators said that paper was "a poor thing for carrying fire in." And no doubt if a man can do full justice to his thought without "the paper," it gives him a clear advantage. But to some preachers "the paper" is indispensable; and with many it more than compensates for the loss of spontaneity by enabling the preacher to say exactly what he wishes to say, and in the best language that he can command. Two of the mightiest as well as fieriest Scottish preachers of last century—Dr. Chalmers and Dr. William Anderson—always used their manuscript. But, as the old lady said, "they had a pith wi' the paper"—they read with all the verve and power of *extempore* utterance.

To the Welsh preachers, prolific in imagination and fancy, pictorial preaching comes naturally. Some of them, indeed, seem, like the prophet, to see visions and dream dreams. With the famous Christmas Evans—that "grand old dreamer and

* *Memoir of Stephen Jenkins*, by Rev. J. R. Hughes. Tonypandy, 1902.

one-eyed seraph"—it was sometimes difficult to know whether he was describing what he had really dreamt, or whether (like Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress*) he was putting his thought into the form of a dream.

Once, at a crowded temperance meeting where Evans was the principal orator, a well-known clergyman in the district who, although he was not an abstainer and was never without plenty of wine on his table, was yet exceedingly anxious to hear the great preacher, crept into a corner of the gallery where he hoped to escape observation. But the flashing eye of the great orator—which Robert Hall once declared was bright enough to light an army through the desert—soon caught sight of him. It was not long before there came a sudden lesson and overwhelming appeal to him.

"I had a strange dream last night," said the speaker, "in which I dreamt that I was in the council chamber of Pandemonium. Suddenly there came a thundering rap at the gates—'Beelzebub! Beelzebub! you must come to earth directly.' 'Why, what's the matter?' 'They are sending out missionaries to the heathen.' The arch fiend rose at once, and, stretching out his dark wings, flew to the place of embarkation. There he saw the missionaries and their wives and a few boxes of Bibles and religious tracts, but near them rows of casks labelled 'gin,' 'rum,' and 'brandy,' which were to go out in the same ship. 'That will do,' he said,

turning away; 'these casks will work more harm than the Bibles or missionaries will do good.' So he stretched out his wings and returned to his own place. Again, however, came a loud call for him. 'Come at once to Wales. They are forming temperance societies and pledging themselves never again to taste any intoxicating drink.' 'That will never do,' said Beelzebub hastily: 'I must see to it at once.' But soon he was back. 'You don't need be alarmed,' he said: 'that work won't take hold, for *the parsons are all with us, and Mr. Blank is at the head of them.*'" As he spoke he glanced like lightning at the clergyman whom he had named. The effect was instantaneous. The clergyman, who had been listening with deep interest throughout the address, rose and said aloud, "I will be at the head of them no longer," and descending from the gallery before the eyes of all, he entered the "table-pew" and signed the pledge.

A story is told in one district suggestive of the need there has been in some parts of Wales, as in adjacent countries, for temperance reform. The stationmaster at Carno, who was an Irishman, booked on an excursion day some thirty or forty farm labourers with "cattle tickets," the ordinary tickets being exhausted. The manager, who passed next day, remonstrated. "Why, Burke," he said, "the men won't like your making beasts of them." "Och, yer hanner," replied the Irishman, "most

of them made bastes of themselves before they returned." *

When referring at a temperance meeting to some men who got so drunk the previous night that they could not find their way home, Mr. John Gilgeran said it reminded him of an incident on the coach from Emlyn to Cardigan. His attention was turned to three dogs that were tied together near him, and he asked the driver where they were going. "I can't tell," said the driver, "and I don't know what to do with them. They have eater their addresses!" "And those men," said the speaker, "if they had not eaten had drunk their addresses, by stupefying their senses with liquor till they didn't even know the way to their own homes."

Some of the local preachers in Wales are plain working-men with as little education as Stephen Jenkins had, but with a personal experience and a mother wit that, within their own sphere, serve an even better purpose.

It is told of Coslett, the blacksmith at Castletown, who was also a preacher—and a successful one amongst the Calvinistic Methodists, that having

* There seems to have been some hard drinking in Wales as far back as 1750, judging from the following entry in the Diary of Robert Wynne of Garthewin, dated December 4th in that year:—"Lay at Garthewin, Mr. Hughes of Tanrallt, who was afraid of going to sleep, lest, as he shut his mouth, his head should be blown off by fermentation of the Bottled Ale he had drunk that evening."

been often threatened, he, at last, applied to the Quarter Sessions for a licence to preach. One of the magistrates, noticing his extremely rustic and unkempt appearance, exclaimed with surprise, "What! you preach! God help you!" "Amen," said Coslett. "God's help and your good wish, sir, will do." He got the licence.

In contrast with the fiery eloquence of many of their own preachers—cultured and uncultured—the Welsh sometimes characterise the insipid sermons that are often heard in the Episcopal Churches as "Water-broth" ("cawl dw'r").

The English with their usual tendency to underrate other nationalities—whether superior, inferior, or equal—have been fond of calling the Welshman "Taffy," and the offensive rhyme—

> Taffy was a Welshman,
> Taffy was a thief,
> Taffy came to my house
> And stole a round of beef—

used often to be flung at him by the coarser classes of English people. Some years since, *Punch* indicated in the following happy verses the better knowledge of the Welsh, which has been gaining ground even in England:—

> Taffy is a Welshman,
> Taffy's not a thief;
> Taffy's mutton's very good,
> Not so good his beef.

I went to Taffy's house,
  Several things I saw:
Cleanliness and godliness,
  Obedience to the law.

He does not drink, my Taffy
  (Not leastways as a rule);
He goes to chapel regular,
  And sends his boys to school.

He dresses well on Sunday,
  His family the like;
He's not too fond of overwork,
  But seldom cares to strike.

He never lurks behind a hedge
  To pay his rent with slugs;
Up craggy hills of steep incline
  His garden mould he lugs.

And there he grows his garden,
  His cabbages and leeks;
His kids get green meat in their mouths
  And roses in their cheeks.

Taffy is a Welshman
  And glories in his name,
To laugh at which enjoyment
  Appears to me a shame.

You tolerate the Scotchman,
  Who talks of Bruce and Burns;
You tolerate the Irishman,
  Who wants ancestral kerns.

Why shouldn't gallant Taffy have
His relics and his bones,
Lewellyns and Cadwallos
And Griffy-evan-jones?

Peaceful and law-abiding as the Welsh people are, yet sometimes—like some others who are not Welsh—they have their own code, and in some matters are not disposed to deal too leniently with the violation of it, especially on the part of strangers. Daniel M'Nee, the artist, used to tell about a Highlander who, one Sunday, on reaching the little church in the glen, told some friend that he had met a stranger on the road whistling and had given him such a mauling for breaking the Sabbath that he didn't think he would get over it in a week. Sometime, however, provocation assumes a form that may excuse correction, even of a drastic kind. Soon after the Llangollen railway was opened, a party of the snob tribe from the Black Country arrived at Llangollen by a "cheap trip." They soon showed their vast superiority to the aborigines by what the natives thought was conduct "insulting and outrageous." A row ensued—the sequel to which can be gathered from the following song, which appeared in the pages of the genial humorist already referred to, to the air "The Maid of Llangollen":—

The vale of Llangollen is all very well,
But a trip to Llangollen's no end of a sell;
Bad luck to the day, on the banks of the Dee,
When the man of Llangollen he pitched into me.

I'd heard a good many romantic sweet tales
Of the Passes sublime in the mountains of Wales,
Things came to a *pass* I did not hope to see,
When the man of Llangollen he pitched into me.

I climbed to Crow Castle as brisk as a cat,
And I've just brought away a memorial of that,
For my eyes are as black as a crow's back can be
Since the man of Llangollen he pitched into me.

The jolly Welsh ale was uncommonly strong,
And through the small streets we came bawling along,
I thought on excursions all larking went free,
Till the man of Llangollen he pitched into me.

When my nose was a-bleeding, to add to my woes,
A Welsh harp played something called *Ah heed your nose!*
I knows what I'll heed, which is larks on the Dee,
Where the man of Llangollen he pitched into me.

Some stories of by-gone times, illustrating Welsh shrewdness and *finesse*, are well worth preserving:—

In 1740, at Mathavarn, near the Dovey, there lived a poet and scholar, David Llwyd, who one night entertained as his guest the Earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII. The earl was on his way to Bosworth, and being anxious to know what fate awaited him, he asked his host, who had the reputation of being an astrologer, to find out for him what the issue of his journey would be. David had a wise and practical wife, whom he often found more help-

ful than the stars; so he told the Earl that he would let him know next morning what lay in the future. That night he consulted his wife as to what he should say. She at once recommended him to make his prediction favourable to the earl: "For," said she, "if you prophesy success to him, and he gains the victory, he will reward us; and if he is vanquished and killed, he can no longer do us harm." From this, it is said, comes the Welsh proverb—"First hear what your wife has to say."

Another story, given by Roberts in his delightful *Gossiping Guide*, tells how a woman outwitted the devil at a bridge in Cardiganshire, known as the Devil's Bridge:—

Old Megan Llandunach
Of Pont y Monach
  Had lost her only cow:
Across the ravine
The cow was seen,
  But to reach it she could not tell how.

The Devil that day
Chanced to wander that way,
  Says he, "Megan, what is the matter?"
"I'm ruined," says she,
"The cow's lost to me,"
  And she set up a dolorous clatter.

Says the Devil, "A bridge
I'll raise from the ridge
  And the two rocks together I'll join,

To recover your loss:
But the first thing to cross
  Must ever and ever be mine."

Old Megan, contented,
Then quickly consented,
  Satan hoped to have made her his prey;
So under her nose
The high arch arose,
  Says the Devil, "Now, trudge it away."

In her pocket she fumbled,
A crust out she tumbled,
  And called on her little black cur;
The crust over she threw,
The cur after it flew,
  Says she, "The dog's yours, crafty sir."

Old Satan looked queer,
He scratched his right ear,
  Then sprang from the side of the ravine,
Says he, "A deft hit!
The biter is bit;
  For the mangy cur isn't worth having."

Another case of a clever escape from a difficulty, which occurred at Cardiff, is thus described in an ancient Welsh chronicle:—

Sir Foulk Fitzwarren was speaking of toils encountered and feats accomplished when warring with the Saracens. His knights murmured, and each said boastfully that he could have done as much himself as their chief had done.

"But those feats," said Sir Foulk, "were nothing to one feat I accomplished nearer home."

"What was that?" quoth they all.

"I jumped," quoth the knight, "from the ground to the top of yonder tower of my castle, which ye know to be the tallest tower in these parts."

At that they laughed scornfully.

"Nay," said he, "if you will dine with me at noonday to-morrow, I will do it once again."

So every one of the knights came to the feast; and when they had well eaten and drunken, "Now come," said Sir Foulk, "with me, and you shall see me jump from the ground to the top of the castle tower."

They proceeded to the foot of the stairs, and Sir Foulk jumped to the top of the first step, then on to another, and so on, till he had jumped upon the topmost step.

"Oh," said the knights, "we could do that ourselves."

"So you could," quoth Sir Foulk, "now that I have taught you the way to do it."

Here are two amusing illustrations of Welsh dexterity in reply:—

When some railway bill was before a Committee of the House of Commons, Mr. Sergeant Merewether, who led for the promoters, said, "I don't come here before you (as counsel often do) with a superficial knowledge of the country through which the proposed line would pass, for I have fished in the rivers

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"You rascal!" he cried, "drain! you say this bog had a bottom!"
"And so it has, my lord, but you have n't reached it yet!" — *Page 23*

and shot on the mountain-sides of the valley of Edeirnion, and have read the Twelve Commandments in the church of Llandrillo."

"Twelve Commandments!" retorted the lawyer on the other side. "Perhaps you will kindly give us the last two."

"Twelve, did I say?" returned the unabashed sergeant. "Well, the eleventh is, 'Don't interrupt counsel when he is addressing the Committee,' and the twelfth you shall have before you want it, when this Committee gives its decision."

The other case occurred when Earl Dudley was out shooting one day over a hilly and marshy bit of ground near Llandrillo, accompanied by a local publican whom he sometimes took with him as a guide. Coming to a suspicious-looking bit of turf, he said to his retainer, "Robert, has this bog any bottom to it?"

"Oh, yes, your lordship, it has," was the reply.

Whereupon the earl jumped over upon it and was at once up to his waist, and still sinking. "You rascal!" he cried, "didn't you say this bog had a bottom?"

"And so it has, my lord," quoth Robert, "but you haven't reached it yet!"

A reply was once made before a Parliamentary Commission that did not say much for the roads by the Severn. It used to be a saying in the Scottish Highlands—

"If you'd seen the roads before they were made,
You'd lift up your hands and bless General Wade."

The Welsh roads were no better; and in wet weather those by "Severn side" had a specially unenviable reputation.

A Welsh gentleman of the vicinity, when under examination before this Parliamentary Committee over a turnpike bill, was asked—

"What roads are there in Monmouthshire?"

He said, "None."

"How, then, do you travel?"

"We travel in ditches," was his answer.

At the time of the Rebecca riots in Carmarthen County, in 1843, over the exorbitant exaction of turnpike tolls, an order was issued that all conveyances should bear the names of their owners, so that when any mischief was done by young farmers, they could be more easily identified. One of them, known as "Stammering Jim," had neglected to put his name on the cart he drove, and he was summoned before the magistrate, who demanded to know why he had not put the name on his conveyance.

"Who-se na-na-name am I to put on?" stuttered Jim.

"Your own, of course," replied the magistrate.

"B-b-b-but it isn't my cart, your worship," said Jim.

"Who's the owner, then?"

"That's the difficulty, sir," said Jim. "The old

sh-sh-shafts belong to David Thomas; the wheels belong to Hugh Jones; the old axle belongs to William Bowen; the t-t-tub belongs t-t-to Joshua Morgan; the t-t-tail-board b-b-belongs to Rees Davis—and only the old nag belongs to me. Then, wh-wh-whose name am I to put on, sir?"

Every country has its eccentric characters, and Wales is no exception.

A queer story is told about Sir John Pryse, the last possessor of that ancient Welsh name, and a somewhat eccentric genius. He had been married twice, and had twice become a widower. His third spouse, when led to the bridal chamber, suddenly perceived the embalmed bodies of the former wives, one on each side of the bed! Having no relish for company of this kind, she hastily retired, and insisted on their being buried "before she would consent to fill their vocation."

At Goodrich, the vicar has a curious relic in the shape of a chalice which was used there by Dean Swift's grandfather, who was vicar in 1728, and who, for being a "Malignant," and zealous on behalf of the King during the Cromwellian war, was plundered more than thirty times by the army of the Parliament, ejected from his living, and himself imprisoned. Judging from the following anecdote about him, he must have had some of the quaint humour of his famous grandson:—

Having mortgaged his estate at Goodrich for three hundred "broad pieces," and quitted them

into his waistcoat, he set out for Raglan Castle, near Monmouth, to which the King had retired after the battle of Naseby in 1645. The Earl of Worcester, who knew him well, asked what his errand was.

"I have come," said Swift, "to give His Majesty my coat," at the same time pulling it off and presenting it.

The Earl told him pleasantly that the coat was not much worth.

"Why, then," said Swift, "take my waistcoat."

This was soon proved by its weight to be a more valuable garment: and it is remembered by Clarendon that the King received no supply more seasonable or acceptable during the whole war than these three hundred broad pieces—his distress being at that time very great, and his resources altogether cut off.

The story is told of a poor lad named Will Jones who ran away from Newlands, near Monmouth, without paying for a pair of new boots he had just got from the shoemaker. The shoemaker, however, had a good opinion of the lad, and said he felt sure Will Jones would pay for the boots some day. But many years passed and Will Jones and the boots were forgotten. One day a poor man, clothed in rags, and apparently bent down by the weight of years, came to Newlands and claimed relief on the ground of his having been born in the place. The local authorities, after questioning him, told him he

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had no claim on them—he had been too long away—and he must go on to Monmouth poorhouse, where accordingly he went.

One day he made his way to Newlands, sought out the shoemaker's shop, and entering it, began to talk to the shoemaker, who became interested in him, and gave him something to eat. By and by, the pauper asked him if he remembered a lad who had run away without paying for a pair of boots. The shoemaker said, "Ay, I remember. He was called Will Jones. But Will was a good lad at bottom, and I always said he would pay for the boots if ever he was able; and if he wasn't, well, poor lad! he could be forgiven."

Next day the pauper had disappeared from the Monmouth poorhouse in his pauper clothes, leaving no trace. But a month after, a handsomely dressed gentleman drove through the village in a coach and pair to the poorhouse, and got out there with a bundle, which he handed in, and which turned out to be the pauper clothes he had worn.

Thereupon, the news spread through the place that the pauper had been William Jones, Esquire, who, since he left Newlands as a boy, had made a fortune in London. Meantime, the gentleman drove to the old shoemaker's, told him who he was, and had a good deal of chaffing with him over the boots. When taking his departure, he left a purse of gold upon the table; and afterwards, in his will, he left to Newlands £5,000 for religious purposes, and some

thousands more to build almhouses for twenty lame and blind.

The Welsh are not given to punning, like the English ; but the following is well worth quoting :— In a Welsh cemetery the following epitaph appears over the grave of a man whose name was *Chest*—

> Here lies at rest, I do protest,
> One *Chest* within another ;
> The chest of wood was very good,
> Who says so of the other ?

Another pun came from a Welsh artist, who, being found by his friends sketching the ruins of an old castle, remarked that he had sat down before it, not as its assailants of old had done, with a view to turn it into a ruin, but to turn the ruin into a view.

The Welsh, like their Celtic cousins the Scottish Highlanders, are proud of the antiquity of their race, language, and literature. And the language is not improbably the oldest living language in Europe, with a literature reaching back to remoter times than that of any other modern tongue except Irish.

But the Welsh (like the Scottish Highlanders with Gaelic) are not content with so limited an antiquity. The Rev. Joseph Harris, editor of the *Seren Gomer*, referred to the claim—which he said no one could disprove—that Welsh was the language spoken by Adam and Eve in Paradise. Perron, the Breton investigator, went further still, and affirmed that Welsh (which he considered the same as Armoric) was the

language of Saturn, Jupiter, and the other principal gods of heathen antiquity!

The Welsh people regard their language as not only most ancient, but as exceedingly euphonious—which is not the impression likely to be made on the mind of any one who is unacquainted with it and can only judge by the spelling.

It is said that the full name of a station in Anglesea near the Menai Bridge is "Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgercherwyrubwilgogerchwyrnbwllandisiliogogogoch," the first part of the name meaning "St. Mary's white hazel pool," the latter part "close to the raging whirlpool by Llandisilio and the red rocky island of Gogo." If this be true, it would be worth something to hear a stranger asking a ticket for that station.

The difficulty with some Welsh names led to one railway station receiving the very un-Welsh-like name of "Strata Florida." The name of the village next to the station when it was opened was "Ystradmeurig." This was felt to be an awkward name for strangers. The only other adjacent village was worse, rejoicing in—or rather, groaning under—the jaw-breaking appellation of Pontrhydvendigaid"! With either name it was felt that for the position of railway porter "no English need apply." Happily, the ruins of the abbey of Strata Florida were not far off, so "Strata Florida" the station was named, and the Gordian knot was cut.

Although the Welsh language appears to the eye

guttural and even barbarous, with its super-abundance of consonants, yet, like the Gaelic, it is really harmonious to the ear, and, according to competent judges, has a wealth and power of expression unsurpassed among living languages—so flexible and energetic, indeed, that whatever is translated into it gains in strength, power, and conciseness of expression. The Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of Education in Wales, who may be accepted as unprejudiced judges, further declared in their report that the Welshman "possesses a mastery over his own language far beyond that which the Englishman of the same degree has over his."

To Welsh literature Archbishop Coxe pays a high and unique tribute, when he declares that though there are about a thousand books in the Welsh language not one of them is immoral in its tendency.

But the nomenclature of Wales, whatever the Welsh may say, has for strangers many hard nuts to crack in pronunciation.

Some of the Scottish names, both Highland and Lowland, such as "Auchtermuchty" and "Corywreehan," tax the resources of English people, but the Welsh in turn have names that baffle the Scotch. For myself I have always been apprehensive when asking a ticket even for places like Llangamarch or Machynlleth, that the clerk would either be unable to identify the name or would regard, with a smile of derision, my attempt at its pronunciation. The double "ll's" used to trouble me most. I was fre-

quently told that "elth" represented the Welsh pronunciation, but an expert declares that this does not give the true sound, and that the following is the way to get nearer to it:—"Fix your tongue (he says) to the roof of your mouth, about one-eighth of an inch further back than when 'l' is articulated, and breathe forcibly through the jaw-teeth on the right side, and *then* say 'elth,' and you will pretty nearly have accomplished your lesson."

These instructions should keep people right in naming places like "Dolgelly" and "Llangollen," provided always that they have those jaw-teeth on the right side.

If the language of Wales claims a high antiquity, some of the old Welsh families come not far short of it. "A Welsh pedigree" has been the theme for joke time out of mind. Archbishop Coxe says of the ancient family of Morgan, that being so conspicuous in Welsh history, the bards exerted their ingenuity to trace its origin and lineage. Some genealogists derive it from the third son of Noah, and modestly correct the mistake of some English genealogists who traced it to Noah's second son, Ham. There are, however, some families in Wales who trace their lineal descent—with much weight of evidence—from heroes who lived at least before the time of the founders of the oldest monarchies in Europe.

The Welsh, like the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders of Scotland, have a fashion of distinguishing a man,

whose name is in itself too common to be distinctive, by adding the name of his father and if necessary his grandfather, and even his great-grandfather, as *e.g.*, Evan ap-Griffith, ap-David, ap-Jenkin. One of their own wags burlesqued this practice by applying it in this witty couplet to Welsh cheese :—

"Adam's own cousin-german by its birth,
Ap-curds, ap-milk, ap-cow, ap-grass, ap-earth."

The old Welsh families are naturally proud of their lineage and history, and are very sensitive over questions of precedence.

A curious illustration of this occurred on one occasion between a representative of the house of Perthir and a representative of the rival house of Werndee. Mr. Proger of Werndee, who had been dining with a friend at Monmouth, proposed riding home in the evening ; but his friend objected at first, as the hour was late and the sky full of threatening clouds.

"Don't mind the lateness of the hour," said Mr. Proger ; "we shall have moonlight ; and if the rain comes, Perthir is not far off the road, and my cousin Powell will, I am sure, gladly give us a night's lodging."

They accordingly mounted their horses ; but being, after a time, overtaken by a storm of rain, rode with all speed to Perthir, where they found that all the family had retired to rest.

Mr. Proger, however, shouted for his cousin, till

at last Mr. Powell opened his bedroom window, and peering out, asked—

"In the name of wonder, what means all this noise? Who is there?

"It's only I, your cousin Proger of Werndee, who have come to your hospitable door for shelter from this storm, and hope you will be so kind as give my friend and me a lodging."

"What! is it you, cousin Proger? You and your friend shall be instantly admitted—on one condition, and that is that you, here and now, admit and promise never afterwards to dispute that I am the real head of the family."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Podger excitedly, "admit that you are the head of the family? Never!"

"Then you get no shelter in my house."

"Do you really mean that?—and on a night like this?"

"I do."

"Very well, so be it," replied the other; "for sooner than lower the position of my family by any such admission, I would ride all night, though it should rain swords and daggers. Come along, Bold," he said to his horse.

And off he went, followed by his half drowned and reluctant companion, and rode through the wild night all the way to Werndee.

IRISH HUMOUR

IRISH HUMOUR

"C-YAR, sorr!" cried an eager Limerick carman to a gentleman who was passing.

"No, thank you. Quite able to walk."

"And long may yer honor be able, but seldom willin'," was the cheerful response.

This good nature, which is so characteristic of Irish humour, is one of its most delightful features.

When Sir Walter Scott was travelling in Ireland, and had crossed a ferry, he put his hand into his pocket to find the sixpence for the ferryman. Finding nothing less than a shilling, he gave that, but said, "That's a shilling, Pat; but you'll give me the sixpence back another time." "And may your honor live till you get it," replied the boatman, with a merry twinkle in his eye.

In Dublin the legal fare for a car-drive between any two points in the city is sixpence; but when these points are very far apart the "fare" is expected to bear this in mind. It was overlooked, however, by a big fat commercial traveller who mounted a car at one extremity of the city to be driven across to the other, but who, on dismounting offered the car-driver the customary sixpence. The driver, instead of taking it, took the horse-cloth

briskly out of the well of the car, shook it out, carefully covered with it the horse's head, and then turning to the traveller, touched his hat cheerfully, and held out his hand for the sixpence. "What was all that for?" asked the traveller. "I didn't want the dacent baste, your honour, to see what a big load he had brought all this way for one little sixpence." The traveller would, no doubt, take the hint and add another.

The Irish girls are racier still. Could anything be more delicious than Kathleen's way of rebuking Rory, who had just stolen a kiss from her? "Rory, you thafe, put that back this minute to the spot you took it from."

No people excel the Irish in smart and ready reply. An English tourist in Ireland was shown the sights by a guide, and amongst the places named were the Devil's Gap and the Devil's Bowl. "The devil owns a good deal of land in Ireland," said the tourist; "he must be an important person in your country." "Your honor's right," was the prompt reply; "but, like the rest of the landlords, his home is in England."

An Irish alderman was giving evidence before a Committee of the House of Lords, and was reading a long statement on the subject. The Chairman, looking with some concern at the bulky manuscript in the witness's hand, said, "Could you not give us the gist of it?" To which the alderman replied, "My lord, it's ALL GIST."

"Rory, you thafe, put that back this minute to the spot you took it from."—*Page 262.*

While a retreat was in progress, an Irish soldier shouted across a barrier of brushwood to a comrade, "Come on, Paddy Mullowny!" "I can't." "Why not?" "I've taken a prisoner." "Bring him along with you." "But he won't come." "Then come away without him." "But he won't let me."

When Morris Quill was asked why he had bought his commission in the 31st regiment, he replied, "To be near my brother, of course, who is in the 32nd."

Archbishop Whately was driving one day with a friend on an outside car. "Paddy," he said to the carman, "if the Black Fellow were allowed his choice between you and me, which of us do you think he would take?" "Me, to be sure, my lord," replied the carman, with a merry twinkle in his eye. "Why so?" "Because," said the carman, "it would be his chance with me, whereas he can be sure of getting your Grace at any time."

When Curran went out to fight a duel with John Egan, the governor of Kilmainham prison, Egan called the attention of the seconds to the unfair advantage his opponent had over him, on account of Curran being so thin, while he himself was so corpulent. "He can hit me," said Egan, "as easily as he could hit a haystack, while I, in aiming at his thin carcase, might as well be aiming at the edge of a knife." "Well, then," said Curran, "let the gentlemen chalk the size of my body on yours, and if I hit you outside of that line, they can arrange to take no account of it."

A sergeant in a regiment of light horse was both very tall and very corpulent, and often joked with one of his men—an Irishman—as to the proneness of his countrymen to make bulls in the course of ordinary conversation. "Be me sowl," says the Irishman, "Ireland never made such a bull as Britain did when she made a *light* horseman of you."

A gentleman (very particular and precise in his pronunciation) was sitting beside Curran listening to a speech. When the speaker once or twice, in using the word "curiosity," pronounced it "curosity," the gentleman whispered to Curran, "Hear how that man murders the language!" "I should hardly say 'murdered,'" whispered Curran in reply; "he has only knocked an 'I' out of it."

The Irish have a charming and cheerful way also of lighting up with a touch of wit even the most disheartening circumstances. The man who fell from a ladder and broke his leg, and when his friends gathered round to commiserate with him, remarked cheerfully, "What a blessing it is that it wasn't my neck!" was probably an Irishman.

I remember hearing of an Irish student who went abroad, and after many years, having made his fortune, returned to Dublin. There he hunted up an old fellow-student who had been his "chum" at college, but whose fortune in life had proved very different from his own. He had come down from affluence to poverty, and was found by his more

fortunate friend living in a single room in an attic.

There was a great revival between them of old memories, and many a hearty laugh they had; but the one who had come home rich could not refrain from expressing his regret at his old friend's ill-fortune.

"I'm afraid," he said, looking round the small and ill-furnished apartment, "I'm afraid you'll find it very inconvenient living in a single room like this."

"Inconvanient!" exclaimed the other cheerfully, "why, my dear fellow, it's the most convanient place I ever was in in my life. When I want now to go to my dining-room, or my drawing-room, or my smoking-room, or my bed-room, why, I have nothing to do but just sit still where I am!"

When a gentleman was giving something to a beggar, he commiserated with him on the raggedness of his coat. "Troth, and it's your honor that's right," replied the beggar, "it's nothing but a bundle of holes sewed together."

Another case was that of Denis O'Flaherty, who declared that his wife was very ungrateful, "for when I married her," said he, "she hadn't a rag to her back, and now she's covered with them."

An Irishman, who had got his legs broken in a railway accident, was advised to sue the railway company for damages. "Sue them for damages, is it?" said he; "sure I have damages enough already; but I'll sue them for repairs."

A child went yelling to its mother, who found that it had swallowed a button. "Well, well, look at that now!" cried the mother. "Bedad, I suppose the next thing you'll want to do will be to swallow a button-hole!"

It is difficult to imagine circumstances out of which the Irishman cannot extract a joke, even if it be at his own expense. When Sheridan, who, as is well known, was constantly in difficulty about money matters, was asked by a creditor for at least the interest on the money lent, Sheridan replied, "My boy, it is not my interest to pay the principal, nor my principle to pay the interest." Making his appearance one day in a pair of new boots, and these having attracted the notice of some of his friends, "Now guess," said he, "how I came by these boots?"

Many probable guesses were made. "No," said Sheridan, "no, you've not hit it, nor ever will. I bought them and—*paid for them!*"

It is a serious difficulty that the Irish can't find their way out of. Irish servant—"Yes, sorr. Mrs. Jones is in. What name shall I say, sorr?" "Professor Wandersplinkenheimer." Servant—"Och, sure, better go right in, yer honor, and take it wid you."

An Irishman in London was boasting to some pot-house companions of the superiority of Ireland to England. "It's the chapest country in the world to live in," said he. "Why, you can buy a fine fat salmon there for sixpence." "And why didn't you

stay there?" asked one of the company. "Troth,' replied Pat, "just because I hadn't the sixpence."

In the days not long gone by, when Irish Home Rulers needed to be cautious in their utterances, a Galway gentleman named Martin made a political speech in which some strong passages occurred, and the reporter underlined them. Upon the plea of privilege, the printer of the paper was called to the bar, but offered to prove that the report was an exact transcript of the member's words. "That may be so," said Martin; "but did I spake them in italics?"

Sheridan, on one occasion, being on a Parliamentary committee, entered the room to find that all the other members were seated and ready to commence business. Perceiving no empty seat, Sheridan bowed, and looking round the table with a droll expression of countenance, said, "Will any gentleman move that I take the chair?"

An Irishman who was to undergo trial in the Court was being comforted by his priest. "Keep up your heart, Denis, my boy. Take my word for it, you'll get justice." "Troth, yer riverence," replied Denis, in an undertone, "and that's just what I'm afraid of!"

The humour in some such cases is quite unconscious. "Well, nurse," said the doctor, "did my prescription prove effective?" "Sure an' it did, sorr," was the reply. "He died this morning as quiet as a lamb."

Though the Irishman's repartee is generally good-natured, he can, on occasion, deliver his blow without putting on the gloves. Mr. Chadwick was one of the ablest members of the anti-union bar, but, like Tom Moore, he was exceedingly diminutive in size. One day he was engaged in a legal contention with a lawyer of colossal size, who, losing his temper, exclaimed, "You little vagabond, if you don't take care, I'll put you in my pocket!" "Then," said Chadwick, "you'll have more law in your pocket than you have ever had in your head."

Curran had a great dislike to Lord Clare, who had quite as great a dislike to Curran. One day, when the Chanceller knew that Curran was to plead before him in the Court of Chancery, he brought his Newfoundland dog with him, and during Curran's speech made a point of looking as if paying more attention to the dog than to the barrister. Suddenly Curran stopped speaking. "Go on, Mr. Curran," said his lordship, "go on." "Oh, I beg a thousand pardons," said Curran; adding, as he glanced at the dog, "I thought your lordship was holding a consultation with your brother on the bench beside you."

On one occasion an attorney, dining at the same table with Swift, and thinking to make a joke at his expense, asked the Dean, "Suppose, doctor, the parsons and the devil went to law, which, in your opinion, would gain the case?" "The devil would," replied the Dean promptly, "for all the lawyers and attorneys would be on his side."

"Do not speak of my honour," said Curran, during the heat of a debate in the Irish House of Commons: "I am the guardian of my own honour." "Faith," replied Sir Boyle Roche, "I knew you were fond of sinecures!"

The Irish of all classes dearly loved a joke.

In the days of the Repeal agitation, Dan O'Connell was followed everywhere in Ireland by reporters from the London papers, watchful for seditious utterances. At one monster meeting in the west, where the building was densely crowded, O'Connell, when he rose, observed some disturbance in the gallery, where the London reporters were trying to get room, but where, as usual, the people were in no mood for granting it. O'Connell, however, to the surprise of every one, announced that he would not speak unless room was made for these gentlemen from London. Room was therefore made reluctantly. "Let them into the front seat," said O'Connell. The front seat was accordingly cleared for the reporters, who were delighted at all this unexpected courtesy, and immediately got their note-books and pencils ready. "Now, gentlemen," said O'Connell, "are you quite ready?" The reporters, pencils in hand, bowed in reply, whereupon O'Connell began his speech—*in Irish!* The faces of the reporters, and the frantic delight of the people, can be imagined.

Archbishop Whately was a great wag. At one clerical dinner in Dublin he asked gravely if any of the clergy present from the country districts could

explain why white sheep eat more grass than black sheep. Some questioned the fact, but Whately assured them that it was a fact well established. One or two then attempted to account for such a fact. "No," said Whately; "the real reason why white sheep eat so much more grass than black sheep is—because there are so many more of them!"

Whately and Dr. Murray, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, often sat side by side in the board-room of the Commissioners of National Education, and knew one another well. At some vice-regal dinner, Whately gravely asked Dr. Murray, "What's the difference, doctor, between you and me?" The doctor began to enumerate a number of momentous differences. "No, that's not it," said Whately; "the difference is that you are a *Roman*, and I am a *Rum-un*."

Dean Swift was annoyed, after preaching a charity sermon in St. Patrick's Cathedral, to find that his sermon had wearied the people, and that they had shown their resentment by giving a very small collection. "They won't have that complaint next time," said the Dean. Accordingly, when the next charity sermon was to be preached, he took for his text, "He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord." "Now," said he, "look at that text. If you give to the poor to-day, you are lending to the Lord. Do you consider that a good security? If so, down with the dust. The collection will now be taken." The collection "broke the record."

IRISH HUMOUR

The Irish are a gay people, like the French. But there is a difference that has often been observed and remarked upon. The French are all gaiety. In the Irish, on the other hand, as is strikingly seen in Moore's melodies, love of fun is combined with a strain of sadness. Hood sang—

> "There's not a string attuned to mirth
> But has its chord in melancholy."

The truth of this is conspicuously seen in the Irish. The fountain of laughter and the fountain of tears are always, with them, found close together.

There is in the Irish an odd and original way of looking at things that is sometimes irresistibly comical. A gentleman who had the misfortune to lose his nose had occasion, daily, on his way to business in Dublin, to pass an old beggar woman who invariably saluted him with the good-natured but, to him, incomprehensible prayer, "Hiven preserve yer honor's eyesight!" The gentleman, after vainly endeavouring to suggest to himself a satisfactory explanation of this curious wish, one day put it to the old woman. "Why do you desire my eyesight preserved? There is nothing the matter with it." "Well, yer honor," replied the beggar woman, "it will be a bad thing for ye if ever your eyesight gets wake, for you'll have nothin' to rest your spectacles on."

A kind-hearted gentleman gave a sixpence to a poor old woman who was begging in the street.

"Long life to your honor," was her grateful acknowledgment, "and may you never see your wife a widow!"

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu once gave half-a-crown to an Irish beggar. The woman, after looking at the coin in delighted amazement for a moment or two, looked up and said, "May the blessed Virgin turn every hair of your head into a moulded candle, to light yer sowl to glory!"

There was good sense, though very oddly expressed, in what the Irishwoman said to her son, "Now, my boy, don't be always doing something else." It was intended as a wise advice to keep his mind on the work he might have in hand.

An Irishwoman was being closely cross-examined in Court with regard to the position of the doors, etc., in her house. "And now, my good woman," said the examining lawyer, "tell the Court how the stairs run in your house." "How do the stairs run?" repeated the woman. "Shure, when I'm oop stairs they run down, and when I'm down stairs they run oop."

A Liverpool friend tells me that at a grave that had been dug in an old churchyard in Ireland, a number of bones had come up with the earth, including a backbone with ribs attached, which was set up against a tree till the grave was to be filled up again. Accompanying the gentleman whose sister was to be buried, there was a friend who asked if this was his family burying-ground?

"It is." "And who was last buried in it?" "It was my old father," replied the gentleman; adding cheerfully, with a wave of his hand towards the backbone and ribs, "this is he," as if introducing his father to his friend.

When Sir Walter Scott was in Ireland in 1825, he paid a visit to Lord Plunkett, and they went together to Glendalough, where a guide conducted them. Lord Plunkett, before leaving, gave the guide to understand that the lame but adventurous visitor was a great poet. "Devil a bit!" replied the guide. "He's a gintleman — a rale dasent gintleman. He gave me half-a-crown."

Pat is as conspicuous for his gallantry and politeness as for his wit. The car was crowded, and two young ladies on getting in immediately put their hands into the straps and prepared to stand, but Pat jumped up and offered his seat.

"But I don't want to take your seat," said one, smiling but hesitating.

"Never mind that," said the gallant Hibernian; "I'd ride on a cow catcher to New York for a smile from such gintlemanly ladies," — and the girl considered this one of the pleasantest compliments she ever received.

A great crowd was gathered at the pit entrance of a theatre waiting till the door should be opened. One of the first arrivals had been an Irishman, who was now in danger of being flattened into a pancake against the door owing to the increasing pressure of

the crowd, and more immediately by the pressure of a big, fat woman, who innocently was being crushed against him. When the crowd surged back for a moment, and the Irishman recovered his breath, he looked at her, and exclaimed, "Aw, but it's proud I am to be squazed to death by so swate a darlint as yourself!"

Three shipmates—English, Scotch, and Irish—were rambling along the street looking in at the shop windows. Through one they observed a charming girl behind the counter, and expressed to one another their admiration of her. They were all anxious to get a nearer view and to hear her speak. At last the Englishman said, "Let us go in and buy something." "Toots," said Sandie, "nae need o' that. Let's gang in and ask if she can change a saxpence for us." The Irishman, who had been gazing at the girl with admiration, said, "Let us go in and ask if she'll let us light our pipes by the light of her beautiful eyes."

The Irish, like the French, are great in rhetoric, but are less cultured and more impulsive; and the Irish orator comes out with a torrent of emotional language and imagery that brooks no control. This, it is conjectured, is the source of what are known as Irish "bulls,"—the quickness and impetuousness of Irish wit, too quick for reflection or control, causing it to tumble, in its hot haste, into laughable blunders and confusions of metaphor. Illustrations could be found even in the speeches of Grattan and Burke.

One Irish orator, speaking with stentorian voice of his country's sufferings, exclaimed, "The cup of Ireland's misery has been overflowing for ages, and is not yet full!"

"With one voice," exclaimed an Orangeman, discussing the possibility of a Parliament on College Green: "with one voice Ulster would lift up its hands and stamp out such an iniquity."

An Irishman was declaiming against the injustice done to his country, and instanced absentee landlordism as one of the worst. "But," said one of his listeners, "that evil has been considerably remedied in recent years. There are not so many absentee landlords now." "Sorr," was the reply, "the country swarms wid 'em."

An Irishman got off a train at a railway station for refreshments, but the bell rang, and before he had finished his glass and got out of the refreshment room the train was moving off. He rushed along the platform after it, shouting, "Hould on, there! hould on! You've got a passenger aboard that's left behind!"

In the course of the Parnell Commission, one witness was being badgered by counsel over his admission that he had ducked to escape a shot that had been fired at him. "Did you not think it cowardly to duck like that?" asked the counsel. "Cowardly!" echoed the witness; "shure, wasn't it better to duck than to be dead all the days of my life?"

The correspondent of a London paper declared recently that he had not been two hours in Ireland when he found, to his delight, that that droll mental characteristic of the Irish people, which has contributed so much to the gaiety of nations, still flourishes in undiminished vigour and freshness. The following notice was posted in a pleasure-boat belonging to a steamship company on the Suir:—"The chairs in the cabin are for the ladies. Gentlemen are requested not to make use of them till the ladies are seated." The contrary order would have been pleasanter to some! He says he clipped the following advertisement from a Kingstown paper:—"James O'Mahony, Wine and Spirit Merchant, Kingstown, has still on hands a small quantity of the whisky which was drunk by the Duke of York while in Dublin." The announcement might naturally excite curiosity as to how he managed to recover whisky that had already been drunk.

An Irish traveller, who loved tenderly his wife and children, once declared with enthusiasm that the best thing about going away from home was getting back again!

Another Irishman boasted at a public meeting that he had begun life with nothing, and had held his own ever since!

A Cork alderman, playing a game at cards, and inspecting the pool, found it deficient. "There's a shilling short," he said; "who put it in?"

An Irish colonel was maintaining the superiority

of the old-time architecture to the modern—"Where," said he triumphantly, "where will you find a modern building that has stood so long as the ancient?"

A story is told in journalistic circles in Dublin of a 'cute farmer who called at one of the newspaper offices to have an advertisement inserted. He was told that the charge would be 6s. for a first insertion and 2s. 6d. for a second. "Faith, then," said he, "I'll rather put it in the second time now, and I'll see about the first time afterwards." This reminds one of the orator who told the people, in a burst of enthusiasm, that they had a great past before them and a still greater future behind them.

In the House of Commons, on one occasion, an Irish member, being interrupted by the Speaker, exclaimed, "Then, sir, I will content myself with reiterating what I was going to say!"

A countrywoman passing through Limerick saw in an undertaker's window a coffin of microscopic size, merely intended as a trade sign. "Och, och!" exclaimed the woman as she contemplated it, "is't possible that can be meant for any livin' crater?"

Two labourers set out from Wexford to walk to Dublin. By the time they reached Bray they were still twelve miles from the capital. "After all," said one, with sudden animation, "twelve miles is just six miles a-piece, so let us walk on."

During a discussion at a meeting of the Trinity College Historical Society upon the small value

placed on human life in uncivilised nations, a speaker mentioned the extraordinary circumstance that in China if a man were condemned to death he could easily hire a substitute to die for him; "and I believe," continued the debater, "that many poor fellows get their living by acting as substitutes in that way."*

A restive pony which was being ridden by a peasant along a country road got into a wayside ditch. The animal, in attempting to extricate itself, got its leg entangled in the stirrup. "Arrah," said Pat, still in the saddle; "if you're going to get up here I'll have to get down." This reminds one of the man who offered for £50 to jump down his own throat.

An Irish priest wrote to a recent Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland asking him to permit a prisoner to attend

* "Bulls" are not confined to the Irish side of the Channel. A Queen's Counsel, in the London Law Courts, said, in addressing the jury "Gentlemen, the charges against my clients are only mares' nests, which have been traced to their birth, and are found to have neither origin nor existence." A nest which never existed, but which has been traced up to its birth, and found to have *no* origin, must surely have been the nest, not of a mare, but of one of Sir Boyle Roche's prize bulls. Newton, in his *Book of Bulls*, gives two cases attributed to Sir George Balfour. Referring in the House of Commons to a proposed loan by the British to the Indian Treasury, Sir George remarked that £2,000,000 was "a mere flea-bite in the ocean." Another time, when speaking about Indian military affairs, he declared that "the pale face of the British soldier was the backbone of our Indian Army."

the funeral of his mother, urging as a plea that she was "his only living relation."

The story is told of an Irish baronet, who, on learning that his married sister had given birth to twins, sent at once, with excited interest, to ask whether he was now an uncle, or an aunt, or both!

An Irish officer who had been in India many years and enjoyed the best of health, could not bear to hear the Indian climate run down as it usually is. "A lot of young fellows," he said, "come out here, and they drink, and they eat, and they eat and they drink, and they die. And then they go home and say it was the climate that did it!"

One "bull" that I have seen is as perplexing as it is funny. An Irish navvy, on reaching home from his work, said to his wife, "Well, now, Biddy, didn't I make a mistake to-day! I saw Pat Ryan on the other side of the strate, and I went over to spake to him: and bedad, I found it wasn't Pat at all, and Pat found that it wasn't me!"

At a certain naval engagement, two sailors—one English and the other Irish—agreed to look after each other in case of accident. During the action the Englishman's leg got shot off, and he called to his friend Pat to carry him to the doctor, which Pat readily proceeded to do. Having got some short distance with his wounded companion on his back, a second ball took off the poor fellow's head. Through the noise and din of battle, Pat was unaware

of this, and continued on his way to the doctor. An officer, observing him at this moment with a headless body on his back, asked him where he was going. "To the dochter, sorr." "The doctor!" rejoined the officer. "What can the doctor do for a man who has had his head knocked off?" Pat dropped the body in surprise, and, regarding it very attentively for a few moments, said, "Sure enough! But, begorra, he towld me it was his leg!"

The dramatic critic of a Dublin paper said, in his notice of *Romeo and Juliet*, that the Mercutio of the play never thoroughly roused himself until the stiletto of Tybalt had given him his quietus.

An Irish coroner, in speaking of the high death-rate in the parish, said he could not account for it, but a large number of people had died that year who had never died before.

A member of Parliament, in a communication recently to one of the London papers, gave the following amusing case from his own experience:—

"Some time ago," he says, "I was in the lobby of the House of Commons, standing near several Irish Nationalist members engaged in earnest conversation. Every now and then one of the group, well known as the holder of an office in the Dillonite party, looked towards me intently, as if he thought he had met me before, but did not quite remember where. At length he advanced towards me with outstretched hand; but finding he had made a mistake, he suddenly stopped, with the inconsequential

"I didn't want the dacent bashe, your honour, to see what a big load he had brought all this way for one little sixpence." — *Page*

remark, 'Oh, I beg pardon! I thought it was you. Of course I smilingly accepted the apology."

Many readers will remember the action which Mr. Wm. O'Brien brought against Lord Salisbury. The first question put to the plaintiff by Sir Edward Clarke in cross-examination was: "You have called Mr. Balfour a murderer, I believe?" Mr. O'Brien explained, "I referred to his myrmidons, not to himself." "What do you mean?" asked the learned counsel. Said Mr. O'Brien, in reply, "I will tell you. In accordance with his telegram, 'Don't hesitate to shoot,' a poor young man was run through the back with a bayonet."

Sir Boyle Roche's wild confusions of metaphor have, many of them, as rich a flavour to-day as they had when they first convulsed the Irish Parliament and the readers of them in newspaper reports.* It was he who said that he would give up the half—nay, the whole—of the constitution, to preserve the remainder.

It was he who declared that if a certain question were put to him, he would emphatically answer in the affirmative, "NO!"

It was he who, suspecting a nefarious design on the part of the Opposition, exclaimed, "Mr. Speaker,

* Sir Boyle Roche held for a time the office of gentleman usher at the Irish Court, and was highly respected by all who knew him. He had probably more sympathy with the popular party than he felt free to show. But his memory only lives in connection with his amusing blunders in speech.

I smell a rat! I see him floating in the air before me; but, mark me, I shall nip him in the bud!"

It was he who advanced the perplexing argument with regard to posterity: "I don't see, Mr. Speaker, why we should put ourselves out of the way to serve posterity. What has posterity done for us?" Apparently disconcerted by the laughter which followed this remark, he proceeded to explain: "By posterity, sir, I do not mean our ancestors, but those who are to come immediately after them."

It was Sir Boyle who declared that he "stood prostrate at the feet of royalty."

It was he who, in one of his letters, said, referring to a party of insurgents who had been put to the sword, "Not a soul of them escaped, except some that were drowned in an adjacent bog; and in a very short time there was nothing to be heard but silence."

It was he who declared that, "If once we permitted the reformers to meddle with the buttresses of our ancient constitution, they would never stop till they brought the foundation-stones tumbling down about the ears of the nation."

It was he who warned the House of what would take place if the French Jacobins found their way into Ireland. "They will cut us into mince-meat, and throw our bleeding heads on that table to stare us in the face."

It was he who, in one of his famous Union speeches, assured the House that "the Union would convert the barren hills into fruitful valleys."

It was he also who said that "single misfortunes never come alone, and that the greatest of all possible misfortunes is generally followed by a greater."

It was he who gave the ludicrously equivocal invitation to a nobleman of his acquaintance: "I hope, my lord, if ever you come within a mile of my house, you'll stay there all night."

It was he who complained, when the shoemaker brought home the boots made for his gouty feet, "You have bungled these boots. I told you to make one *larger* than the other, and instead of that you have made one *smaller* than the other,—the very opposite."

The queer tendency of which these are illustrations is, like the ruling passion, strong even in death, and in the presence of it. A soldier was dreadfully wounded in battle, and, as he lay on the ground, a wounded comrade near him kept up a continual howling from pain. "What the divil are ye shoutin' like that for," said Pat; "do ye think that nobody's kilt but yerself?"

Another queer feature of the Irish character that looks not unlike his impetuous wit turned into a more excitable and dangerous channel, is his fondness for a "shindy." It is said of the Englishman, that he is never happy except when he is grumbling; of the Scot, that he never feels at home except when he is abroad; and of the Irishman, that he is never at peace except when he is fighting. Certain it is, that where the Scot or the Englishman would seek

enjoyment in comfort, the Irishman seeks it in excitement, and that he often fights out of pure enjoyment, and without any ill-will towards the people he fights with.

An Irish farmer was driving through the streets on his way home, when he suddenly came in sight of a crowd and a great fight going on down one of the streets he was crossing. The sight was too tempting for his self-control. He handed the reins of the car to his boy, snatched his shillelagh out of the well of the car, jumped off, and dashed into the thick of the fight without any idea as to the cause of it, or which side was right and which wrong. After a time, he emerged from the fray limping, and with hat smashed, one eye black, and his mouth bleeding. Reaching his car, he mounted with difficulty, replaced his shillelagh, and took the reins from the boy, remarking cheerfully, as he wiped the blood from his lips, "Well, Teddy, my boy, that's the only bit of rale pleasure I've had since we left home."

It was an Irishman who, on being bound over to keep the peace against all Her Majesty's subjects, exclaimed, "Then Heaven help the first foreigner I meet!"

When faction fighting was rife in Ireland, and when the "bhoys" were accustomed to "hould discussions" with the shillelagh at every fair, it was important for a man to have as many brought into the family connection as possible – "to increase his

followin'," as the expression was, by extending in every way the number of his relations. Perhaps this may account for relationships that suggest the Highlander with his forty-second cousin, and can better even that. "Do you know Pat Meehan?" asked a stranger in an Irish village. "Pat Meehan! Of course I do," replied the other. "Why, he's a near relation of mine. He wance proposed for my sister Kate."

The Irish peasant, it is said, will, with his inherent propensity for fighting, go anywhere—to fairs, dances, weddings, or funerals—if there is a likelihood of getting or giving a broken head. An Irishman gave as his advice to an English friend on introducing him to a Tipperary row, "Wherever you see a head, hit it."

Even, however, where fighting is concerned, Pat shows himself capable now and then of second thoughts. A peasant, undersized but wrathful, and with his shillelagh grasped threateningly in his hand, was going about the fair asking, "Who struck Buckley? Show me the man who struck Buckley!" But when a stalwart and dangerous looking man stepped forward, saying, "'Twas I," the little peasant looked at him and said more quietly, "Well, perhaps Buckley deserved it."

At one of the country fairs, a young Irishman, blackthorn in hand, was passing a tent, when he observed the tent-cloth bulging out at one point, showing the shape of somebody's head who was

sitting drinking inside. The sight was too tempting, and lifting his stick, he came down with a smart blow on the spot. This was instantly followed by yells of indignation from within, and out dashed several young men, shillelaghs in hand, to execute vengeance on the assailant. They turned out to be friends of his own. On their seeing him, they cried with astonishment, "Och, Mick! did you not know it was Brady O'Brien that you hit?" "Bad luck to me!" exclaimed Mick; "was it Brady O'Brien? —Brady, that I love like a brother! But if it had been my own father, and his head so nate and convanient, what could I do?" The force of the argument was irresistible, and no further action was taken.

There used to be a kind of fighting at the great fairs that had more in them of the nature of pay-days, or times for squaring up, than of extemporaneous combats. Family feuds were left over till the fair-time, and were then fought out, the parties afterwards returning home in perfect friendship.

The Irish have long had the reputation of being thriftless, and of finding it easier to spend money than to save it. An Englishman, Scotchman, and Irishman were jocularly discussing the reason for the shape of coined money. The Englishman said it was made round because it was meant to circulate. The Scot said it was made flat that it might be piled up. "Not a bit," said the Irishman, twirling a half-crown on the table as he spoke; "it's made

like that, the better to spin." And some of them, no doubt, make it spin more quickly than wisely. If the English are liberal in giving, and enterprising in risking money, and the Scotch keen in acquiring it, the Irish are too often reckless in making it go.

The very generosity of the Irish character probably helps to account for the prevalence of thriftlessness and improvidence. One often sees the money that has been earned by hard toil slipping carelessly away from between their fingers. They quiz the Scotch folk about their excessive carefulness. I remember, at Limerick, an Irish gentleman telling me with great gusto about a company of Scotch artisans who were enjoying a holiday in that city. One wet day, when they were crossing the muddy street, one of them was accidently knocked down and run over by a jaunting car. Another of the party, who was a little way behind, came rushing up in great excitement to where his friend was lying stunned by the fall. A gentleman who had already hurried over to help, said, seeing this one's excitement, "Is he a relation of yours, sir?" "Na," exclaimed the Scot, "he's no relation, but he's got on a pair o' my breeks!"

Anxiety lest these nether habiliments had been torn would certainly not have been the first thought in an Irishman's mind, but, all the same, a little more of Scotch thriftiness would in many ways be a blessing to the Irish people, and a help to their independence.

The raggedness of the poor, especially in the South of Ireland, is pathetic on the one side, but ludicrous on the other. You will see men wearing old satin hats that have long since forgotten having ever had either crown or brim. You will sometimes see a woman wearing a man's overcoat, all in tatters. The beggars, of course, carry the palm for raggedness. Some one says that when the beggars of other countries are done with their rags, they ship them over to Ireland. However that may be, it is well to remember that the poverty of the Irish is perhaps as much a misfortune as a fault, and a misfortune for which misgovernment has not been altogether irresponsible.

Even, however, in his taste, the typical Irish countryman is decidedly odd. A friend declared to me that at a country fair which he attended on business, some thirty years ago, the farmers were dressed in coats of all colours—green, grey, chocolate, and indigo blue—many of them faded, all of them torn somewhere or other, and (to all appearance) hardly one of them made for the man who was wearing it.

There are many of the Irish proverbs that have wit in them as well as wisdom. Some of them are now found, either in their original form or adapted, amongst the proverbs current on this side of the Irish Channel. Others of them are found to be identical with proverbs current amongst the nations of antiquity. Here are a few with the Irish flavour in them:—

Far-away cows have long horns.

Going to a goat's house to look for wool.

He breaks his wife's head and then buys a plaster for it.

A shoemaker's wife and a smith's mare are always badly shod.

A watched pot never boils—meaning that a thing anxiously expected seems long in coming.

Don't tie with your tongue what you can't open with your teeth—being a warning against improvident marriages.

God never made a mouth without making something to put into it.

He cut a rod to whip his own back.

He improves, like bad fish in July!

The man that's born to be hanged needn't fear water.

He would swear a hole through a gridiron.

It's easy to bake, with meal at your hands.

It's to please herself that the cat sings her cronan.

Skinning a flea for its hide and tallow.

Looking for a hound without knowing its colour.

More *holy* than godly—a jest on ragged clothes.

The pig is on your back—a reference to bad humour.

Never scald your lips with another man's porridge.

Put more potatoes in the pot; maybe some one is coming down Scollach Gap—a kindly proverb, meaning that some stranger may be arriving hungry.

She wipes the plates with the cat's tail—spoken of a slattern.

She wipes her face with the pot rag.

That woman won't sell her hen on a rainy day—expressive of cleverness.

The foot at rest meets nothing.

The longest way round is the shortest way home—meaning that regular industry is better than speculation.

The scanty dish tastes well.

What can't be had is just what's wished for.

Getting a blind man to judge of colour.

What the devil gives with one hand he takes with the other.

Don't keep a dog and bark yourself.

Some rare and genuine specimens of Irish humour are to be found in Macguire's *Life of Father Mathew*, especially in the reports given of speeches by some of Father Mathew's converts to total abstinence at meetings in country districts.

At one such meeting, crowded and enthusiastic as usual, there had been brilliant speeches given by some of Father Mathew's regular lieutenants; but the people wanted more, and shouted for Tim—a man who, before Father Mathew's wonderful work began, had been a terrible drinker. It was only after much persuasion that Tim was at last induced to step into the narrow space on the platform reserved for the speakers. Once there, he bowed

to Father Mathew, nodded to the others, and after taking one or two preliminary scratches at his red poll, began thus:—

"Your riverence, ladies and gentlemen, de dickens a one of me knows how to make a speech at all, so you must excuse me, if you please; but it would be a mane thing in me to be after denying the goodness of God; an' sure it is I am de boy dat see de two sides of de shillin'—de bad and de good. I've nottin' to boast of in de way of hoight; and dough I say it that shouldn't say it, dere were few boys of my inches dat would bate me in hurley and football dough dat isn't here nor dere—but small as I am, I could put a gallon of porter out of sight wid de best of them; and as for whisky, why, 'twas like mudder's milk to me—I'd lap it as de cat laps craime. Of coorse, dere arn't people standin' in de middle of de road wid pints of porter in dere hands, sayin', 'Good man, will you be plased to drink a drop dis hot day, or dis cowld mornin'?' for wheder 'tis hot or cold 'tis all de same—one drinks to be cowld and anoder drinks to be hot—an' 'tis mighty cowld it is in de end.

"No, yer riverence, and ladies and gentlemen, little ye gets for nottin' in dis world and faith 'tis myself had such a druthe upon me, dat 'twas just as if I swallowed a lime-burner's wig. I hadn't aise or pace as long as I wasn't turnin' the bottom of a pint or a nuggin' to de ceilin'—and so long as I had a fardin', I nebber let it in drink. Dere are many

here dat knows me, and knows dat I was a good hand at earnin' money; but if one thinks of nottin' but drinkin', de devil a good 'twould do to him, if he had de Bank of Ireland to call his own. So, you see, ladies, the poor wife hadn't a fardin' to bless herself wid, and de childer, the craychers, often went to bed cowld, and me blackguardin' an' gladiaterin' about de town, drinkin' here and drinkin' there, until one 'ud think I'd burst, savin' yer presence; for de dickens a one of me knows where I put it at all. I was like a punchin on two legs. Yer riverence, I'm puzzled entirely to understand dat one doesn't take half nor quarter of wholesome tay dat one does of porter or punch; but if de tay we had here dis evenin' was punch, and I in the bad ould times, 'tisn't de tay-cup but de big jug dat 'ud be my share dis blessed night.

"Well, of coorse, dis kind of ting couldn't go on widout bringin' me an' the poor wife and children to sup sorrow. I first drank my own clothes into de pawn—den I drank my wife's cloak off her back—den I drank her flannel petticoat and her gound—den I drank de cups and de saucers out ov de cupboard—den I drunk de plates and de dishes off ov de dresser—den I drank de pot and de kettle off ov de fire—den I drank de bed-clothes off ov de bed, and de bed from under meself and me wife, until (de Lord bless me) dere wasn't a mortial haporth dat wasn't turned into gallons ov porter and glasses ov whisky. Well, what brought me to my sinses at

last was de cowld flure, and de poor childer cryin, 'Daddy, daddy, we're hungry.' I remember de last night of my blackguardin', dere wasn't a bit to ait, or a sup to taste, for de poor little tings; and I towld them to go to bed, and to hould der whist, an' not bodder me. 'Daddy, daddy, we're hungry,' says de biggest fellow; 'and our mudder didn't ait a bit all day, and she gave all she had to Katie and Billy!' 'Daddy, daddy,' says de littlest of the boys —dat's Billy—'I can't go to slape, I'm so cowld.' 'God forgive your onnatural fader!' says I, 'for 'tis he is de purty boy intirely! wid his drinkin' and his blackguardin'. Hould yer whist,' says I, 'and I'll make ye comfortable;' an' wid dat, savin' yer presence, ladies, I takes me breeches —'tis no laughin' matter, I can tell ye— and I goes over to de craychers —and I sticks one of de childer into one of de legs, an' anoder of de childer into de oder leg, an' I buttons de waistband round dere necks, and I towld dem for de life of em' not to dare so much as sneeze for de rest of de night —an' dey didn't, poor childer. But by cockcrow in de mornin', Billy, who was a mighty urly bird, cries out, 'Daddy, daddy!' 'What's de matter?' says I. 'I want to get up, daddy,' says he. 'Well, get up, and bed scran to ye,' says I. 'I can't,' says he. 'Why can't ye, ye kantankerous cur?' says I. 'Me and Tommy is in de breeches,' says he. 'Get out of it, den,' says I. 'But, daddy, we're buttoned up,' says de little fellow, as smart as you plaze. So up I got and unbuttoned

the craychers; and I says to myself, 'twas a burnin' shame dat de children ov a Christian, lave alone a haythen, should be buttoned up in a breeches instead of lyin' in a dacent bed. So I slipped on de breeches on my own shanks, and off I goes to his riverence, and I takes de pledge; and 'twas de crown piece dat your riverence, God bless you, slipped into de heel ov my fist dat set me up again in de world.

"Ladies and gentlemen, me story is towld; an' all I have to say is dis, dough I don't be for standin' trates or takin' trates, still an' all, if a friend comes in de way he's welcome as de flowers of May; an' glory be to de Lord, and tanks to his riverence, dere's now a clane place to resave him, an' a good leg ov mutton an' trimmins on de table. Now, ladies and gentlemen, dat's what I calls de two sides of de shillin'—de bad an' de good."

The reader, as Mr. Maeguire says, may imagine the applause amid which Tim, proud of his oratorical success, retired to his former corner, where he was received by his blushing but happy wife, and listened with complacency to the congratulations of his friends.

"Billy Martin," who had a good deal to do with the getting of Father Mathew to join and to lead the temperance movement in Ireland, was a thorough Hibernian. At the first time of his adopting temperance notions, which were decidedly repugnant to his social and convivial habits, he was far advanced

in life; and when he signed his name on the 10th of April, 1838, he was within two years of the patriarchal age of seventy. But he was as strong as an elephant and as active as a horse—the two animals he invariably introduced into what may be termed his sensation speeches. Broad, sturdy, and vigorous, he had gone into the cause with all the earnestness, honesty, and obstinacy of his nature. Honest and upright in his dealings, he was just the man to "stand no nonsense," and to despise half-measures from the bottom of his soul. William was a philanthropist, and abhorred slavery and oppression of every kind. He was a negro emancipationist, and an enemy to capital punishment; but to no cause did he devote a tithe of the ardour and energy that he did to temperance. He had given up whisky-punch and wine and porter himself; and why shouldn't everyone do the same? He made the sacrifice—if it were a sacrifice—and he should like to know why every other person in the world should not do likewise?

For years William had been accustomed to decorate his shop window with flaring placards and startling pictures, which silently though forcibly advocated his darling cause. Whatever came from the temperance printing press which most strikingly illustrated the folly, the ruin, or the disgrace of drunkenness, or depicted in the most glowing colours the advantages which followed in the path of sobriety, found a place in this picture-gallery of his.

No caricature of the "miserable drunkard" was too broad for his taste; it was impossible that the colours could be laid on too thick or too dark for William's satisfaction. Besides, as he said, the public were to be frightened if they could not be argued out of the folly and wickedness of their drinking habits; and the ladies, too, he added, should be shown "what came of their drinking their couple of glasses of their nice port and their beautiful sherry." There were pictures to suit every understanding. Those who could not be won by examples of domestic felicity (in which a lady in pink, with a very small child sitting on the carpet at her feet, and a gentleman in a blue coat and yellow trousers, reading by a lamp, pleasantly figured), were appealed to through their grosser sense by the representation of a prodigious plum-pudding, bristling with huge almonds, or of a mammoth round of beef; while those who were insensible to persuasion, and should be dealt with sternly, were aroused to a sense of their danger by a picture, in which a gentleman was represented in the act of administering a second and evidently superfluous blow to his wife with a poker of gigantic dimensions; or a street scene, in which the "groggery" and the brewery and distillery were represented as being under the direct superintendence (and indeed active management) of Satan and a host of hoofed and horned satellites.

Billy delighted in all the battle-cries of temperance oratory, and repeated with undiminished relish

certain couplets which enriched the orations of the ordinary temperance platforms, such as—

"Drink of the fountain bubbling free;
'Twas good for Samson, and 'tis good for thee."

Though a friend, and a lover of peace, William was a fiery zealot in temperance. He preached total abstinence on many occasions with an energy and vehemence startling to unaccustomed ears. His speech was at times rather a war-whoop than an appeal to the reasoning faculties.

In this respect he was a remarkable contrast to those members of the Society of Friends who had joined at an early period. Bland and gentle in manner, and persuasive in advocacy, they, when compared with William, were as the softest whispering of the gentlest zephyr to the swell and roar of the storm. Nor was William Martin always in the stormy mood: he could be humorous and playful; and relished fun amazingly, as well as indulged in it, to the vast delight of his audience—especially after the company had enjoyed a more than usually satisfactory tea.

Mr. Macguire describes the amazement depicted on the countenances of two American friends whom Father Mathew had brought with him to a soiree, while listening to a speech from William, who was in majestic force this night, and seemed determined to afford his transatlantic brethren a lively idea of how things were done in Ireland. He revelled in comical

pictures and droll incidents, and he wound up with his favourite queries, which clinched the argument, and left his imaginary opponent trampled beneath his sturdy feet. Imagine this broad-shouldered, vigorous old man of seventy roaring out the following questions and answers, his voice swelling in volume and his vehemence culminating to a force quite prodigious at the final and crushing assertion: —"What does the Racehorse drink?—Water! What does the Elephant drink?—Water!! What does the Lion drink?—Water!!! It is good for Man, Beast, and Bird!!!!" As he shouted out the last word, which he usually pronounced as if it were spelt with a "u" instead of an "i," he was carried away by his energy, and literary roared and stamped—the American friends looking on in indescribable amazement, perhaps either dreading apoplexy for the impassioned orator, or the sudden giving way of the floor, which no doubt William sorely tried. Father Mathew thoroughly relished his friend William's exhibitions of "earnestness and sincerity," as he somewhat mildly designated these grand outbursts.

Mr. Macguire also gives an amusing account of the performance of a genuine village band, which had been established, as its patrons alleged, "to cheer and delight the members with its strains of melody." I had (he says) been requested by Father Mathew to accompany him to the "Festival"; and as the carriage approached the door of the house in which the tea party was to be held, we were saluted by a

startling outburst of complicated sounds that, on the whole, bore some resemblance to the air generally known as the "Conquering Hero." Had not the spirit of the horses been rather tamed down by a long pull it would be difficult to say what might have happened; for the big drum was beaten by the village blacksmith, who was, to do him the barest justice, a powerful performer.

The hall was a moderate-sized but low-ceiled room, whose walls were decorated with evergreens and garlands of flowers—for it was in the middle of June. The banner of the society occupied a conspicuous place over the chair, which was grandly upholstered with crimson merino, and on the wall, at the end, the words, "*Cead Mille Failtha*" ("A hundred thousand welcomes!") were painted in large yellow letters on a strip of green calico. At the top of the room, before the chair, was a mahogany table, lent for the occasion by some local patron of temperance; and this table was resplendent with tea pots and coffee pots, some of silver and more of grand "britannia" also lent to do honour to Father Mathew. Two narrow tables, made of planks, knocked together for the occasion, ran down the length of the room, and sustained mountains of bread and butter, the slices of substantial thickness; also jugs of enormous size and cups of liberal dimensions. At the tables sat young and old, from the grandmother to the child in arms. The *élite* of the village was there; and many a healthy decent-looking man, now sitting in quiet gravity in

the midst of his family, was, not many years, perhaps even months before, the tyrant of his home and the pest of the neighbourhood. The elderly ladies rejoiced in snowy caps, with grand borders and flaring ribbons; and the young exhibited equal taste in the simple neatness of their dress, and the careful arrangement of their glossy hair. The appearance which the crowded but over-close chamber presented was a pleasing and a hopeful one indeed. On a raised and railed-off platform at the end of the room the band had taken their position; and as Father Mathew entered, the "Conquering Hero" was again given, in a style which would have impelled the "Enraged Musician" to instantaneous suicide, had he been present at that merciless piece of instrumentation. But the audience, whose ears were in their hearts, could hear no discord whatever, and thought it the most ravishing harmony. And Father Mathew, looking as noble as a king, beamed with delight, his eyes and lips smiling in concert. Nor was he wanting in abundant praise of the performance, which, awful and nerve-shattering as it was to unaccustomed ears, was really wonderful, inasmuch as the greater number of the performers had never held a musical instrument in their hands a month previously to this grand exhibition of their proficiency. When the last bar was concluded, up rose Father Mathew, who, bowing with grace towards the orchestra, said—"Thank you, gentlemen! thank you very much for your *beautiful* music!" The band was in a flutter of

ecstasy at this public tribute from "one of the greatest men in the world," and not a member present but felt the compliment. "I knew, sir," said a village dame to me, "that his riverence would be plazed. Faith, sir, I think the boys plays as well as the army, if not better."

Then came the tea, and just as the company are about enjoying themselves in that luxury which cheers but does not inebriate, the tap of the drum is heard—then another tap—and, at the third, your whole nervous being is assailed with a crash of sounds such as for the moment to bewilder you. Shriek and squeak, bur, and roar, and clash, with a blending of all, and an occasional predominance of some—this is the band executing "Love not!" The tumult is awful. The walls, you imagine, must shortly yield to the stupendous reverberations created by the big drum, which is under the able hands of the muscular blacksmith. The performers proudly persevere. The members are in a state of rapture, and reward the musicians with a loud clapping of hands and stamping on the floor. "Very beautiful, indeed!" is heard again from the President, whose commendation, honest and sincere, is by no means endorsed by the other occupants of the upper table. The members of the band—Dinny and Ned and Larry and Tom and Billy—are invited by their delighted friends and relatives to seat themselves at the tables and "make much of themselves, poor boys;" and the largest cups and the thickest slices are awarded to the per-

formers, as some faint expression of gratitude and admiration. The big drum has a place of honour, for his labour has been mighty, and he now wipes the accumulated moisture from his manly brow.

When the band have done themselves justice, they again proceed to the "orchestra." Some whispered consultation is seen to be carried on; and, shortly after, a member of that important body makes his way through the crowded room to where Father Mathew is seated, and announces his message, which resulted in the following dialogue:—"Plaze your reverence, the gintlemen of the band would like to know what chune your reverence would prefer." "Oh, my dear, anything the gentlemen please themselves." "Your reverence, they'd like to lave it to yourself." "Well, my dear, 'God save the Queen' is a very fine air, and so is 'Patrick's Day.'" "I'm afeard, sir, we're only larning them tunes: but would your reverence like the 'Conquering Hero'?" "Hadn't we that before, my dear?" "Well, you had, your reverence. Perhaps your reverence will be after liking 'Love not'?—that's a mighty swate thing." "It is indeed, my dear, a very nice air; but hadn't we that also?" "Well, you had, your reverence; but the gintlemen of the band thought you'd like to plaze yourself." Father Mathew, of course, understood the limited nature of the band's *repertoire*, and so he gravely called for the "Conquering Hero," and expressed a hope that it might be followed, in the course of the evening, by that

delightful air, "Love not." The band felt the more proud at having been paid this graceful compliment, and they executed the doomed pieces of music several times that night with unabated vigour and undiminished discord.

Mr. Macguire says, however, that in a few months no one could have recognised the band, so wonderfully did it improve with constant practice for the temperance gatherings: and one cannot but think how greatly Ireland itself would improve, both materially and morally—and our own country also—if Father Mathew's total abstinence principles were more widely adopted.

AMERICAN HUMOUR

AMERICAN HUMOUR

WHEN some one was describing to a Yankee the extraordinary speed of the Flying Scotchman, the Yankee replied, "That ain't a circumstance to our Lightning Express, sir. Why, one day a passenger leaned out to give a good-bye kiss to his wife. At that moment the train started — so mighty quick that the man found himself giving the kiss to a big black woman, who happened to be standing on the platform at the next station. Yes, sir."

This was not only a choice illustration of good-natured American brag, but of the preposterous and ludicrous exaggerations which was one of the earliest, and remains one of the most characteristic forms of American humour.

They tell, for example, of trees on the great Pacific slope, so high that it takes two men and a boy to see to the top of one — the first man looking till he is tired, and the second beginning where the first man left off. They tell about a man so tall that he had to get up a ladder to shave himself; and of

a negro so black that charcoal made a chalk mark upon him.

They tell of a horse—an American horse, of course—that ran so fast round the circus that it could see its own tail about a yard ahead. They tell about American gunboats of draught so light that they can float wherever the ground is a little damp. They tell of an artist who painted a snowstorm so naturally, that his friend caught cold by sitting too near it with his hat off. They tell about a hair-restorer of such wonderful strength that when somebody dipped the end of his penholder into it, it grew rapidly into a shaving-brush. They tell about a storm that burst with such terrific fury upon one of their lake steamboats, that four powerful sailors were required to hold on the captain's whiskers. They tell of gas in some western city so very poor, that the man who went round to put out the lights had to carry a lantern with him to find out where the lamp-posts were. They tell of an unguent of such remarkable efficacy, that when a dog's tail was accidentally chopped off and the unguent was applied a fresh tail grew; and when some was next applied to the chopped-off tail a new dog grew.

This sort of humour—so characteristic of the Americans—was probably a comic reflex of the exaggerated features of nature, and the wonderful resources of the New World, that presented themselves so vividly to settlers going out from a small country like ours—especially in the earlier days of

the Republic, when the country seemed immeasurable, and its resources absolutely exhaustless.

Even the form of government—with the new and dazzling opportunities it seemed to offer, as compared with countries where the high places were monopolised by, and practically secured to, the hereditary aristocracy—would help to inflame the imagination. A boy, who to-day brushed boots in the streets of New York, might thirty years later be governor of that great State; and a lad working on a western farm as a rail-splitter, or as a hand aboard a river steamboat, might rise, in after years, to be President of the United States of America—the four years' King of the great Republic.

But the illimitable vastness and resource of the New World would act even more widely and more powerfully in the same direction. A man emigrating from a country like this, where we speak of a noble lake, meaning a lake like Windermere or Loch Lomond, where a steamer in two or three hours passes from end to end, would find himself in a vast country with inland lakes like oceans, where a steamer in crossing loses sight of land altogether. Leaving a country where we speak of a noble river, meaning a river like the Thames or the Forth, where a few hours take one to the head of navigation, emigrants would find themselves in a country where on stately rivers, winding through illimitable plains, they might have to sail on unceasingly for days and nights before arriving at their destination. Bound

less prairies, unfathomable forests—everything on a vast scale—no wonder that the very wit of such a land took the form of preposterous exaggeration. It becomes easy to understand Mick's language in welcoming his brother Barney, who had followed him to America—"Troth, Barney, and it's a big country you've come to. We've got lakes here that you could throw ould Ireland into, and it would just be like a fly in a bowl of milk. And as for Scotland, bedad, we've got caves in Kentucky that you could hide Scotland away in, and it would never be found at all except for the smell of the whisky!"

It was in harmony with this tendency to ludicrous exaggeration that, during the last days of the Civil War, when uniforms on the Confederate side were becoming more and more ragged and scarce, one soldier wrote:—"No man in our regiment has had a whole suit of clothes for two months. We've gone on guard dressed only in overcoat and musket, and we've done scout duty in easy and elegant attire of a revolver and one pair of shoes to three men. When we've wanted to dress extra fine for service on Sunday, we have tied a red rag round each leg, and polished our muskets. The chaplain—for decency's sake—when he preaches, stands in an empty pork barrel to hide his legs. I called on the colonel yesterday, dressed only in a bayonet. He admired the airiness of my costume, but said I had better shoot a few Yanks, and when I had bagged

one of my own size, I might help myself to his breeches."

This form of humour abounds in American literature. Mark Twain's wit, though full of variety, is specially rich in burlesque and exaggeration. For instance, in speaking of "that awful German language," he says—"In the hospital yesterday, a word of thirteen syllables was successfully removed from a patient—a north German from near Hamburg: but as, most unfortunately, the surgeons had opened him at the wrong place, under the impression that he contained a panorama, he died. Some German words are so long that they have a perspective. They are not words, they are alphabetical processions. One can open a German newspaper any time, and see them marching majestically across the page. Here are some specimens *Generalstaatsverordnetenversammlungen*. *Wiederherrstellungsbestrebungen*."

Then follow some suggestions for the improvement of the German language:—"I would do away with these long compounded words, or require the speaker to deliver them in sections with intervals between for refreshment. I would also reorganise the sexes, and distribute them according to the will of the Creator. This would be a mark of respect if nothing else."

The following is a more elaborate specimen from Max Adeler, whose stories derive most of their attractiveness and zest from clever and ludicrous exaggeration. The sketch is entitled

"THE WOODEN LEG."

"Mr. Brown, you don't want a first-rate wooden leg, do you?"

The speaker was a thin, seedy-looking man, with a wooden leg, who came into Mr. Brown's grocery store, where several neighbours were gathered round the stove chatting with the store-keeper.

Mr. Brown looked at the stranger, who repeated his inquiry—"You don't want to buy a first-rate wooden leg, do you? I've got one that I've been wearing for two or three years, and I want to sell it. I'm hard up for money; and although I'm attached to that leg, I'm willing to part with it so's I can get the necessaries of life. Legs are all well enough; they are handy to have around the house, and all that; but a man must eat—must attend to his stomach, if he has to walk about on the small of his back. Now, I'm going to make you an offer. That leg is Fairchild's patent; steel springs, india-rubber joints, elastic toes, and everything, and it's in better order now than it was when I bought it. It'd be a comfort to any man. It's the most luxurious leg I ever came across. If bliss ever kin be reached by a man this side of the tomb, it belongs to the person who gets that leg on and feels the consciousness creeping over his soul that it is his. Consequently, I say that when I offer it to you I'm doing a personal favour; and I think I see you jump at the chance, and want to clinch the bargain before I mention—you'll hardly believe it, I know—that I'll actually knock that leg down to you at four hundred dollars. Four hundred, did I say? I meant six; but let it stand. I never back out when I make an offer; but it's just throwing that leg away—it is indeed."

"But I don't want an artificial leg," said Brown.

"The beautiful thing about the limb," said the stranger, pulling up his trousers and displaying the article, "is that it is reliable. You kin depend upon it. It's always there. Some legs that I've seen were treacherous—most always some of the springs bursting out, or the joints working backwards, or the toes turning down and ketching in things. Regular frauds. But it's almost pathetic the way this leg goes on, year in and year out, like an old faithful friend, never knowing an ache or a pain, no rheumatism, nor any such foolishness as that, but always good-natured, and ready to go out of its way to oblige you. A man feels *like* a man when he gets such a thing under him. Talk about your kings and emperors and millionaires, and all that sort of nonsense. Which of 'em's got a leg like that? Which of 'em can unscrew his knee-pan, and look at the gum thingamijigs in his calf? Which of 'em kin leave his leg downstairs in the entry on the hat-rack, and go to bed with one cold foot? Why, it's enough to make one of them monarchs sick to think of such a convenience. But they can't help it. There's only one man kin buy that leg, and that's you, and so bad I want you to have it that I'll deed it to you for fifty dollars down. Awful, isn't it? Just throwing it away: but take it, take it, if it does make my heart bleed to see it go out of the family."

"Really, I have no use for such a thing," said Mr. Brown.

"You can't think," urged the stranger, "what a benediction a leg like that is in a family. When you don't want to walk with it, it comes into play for the children to ride horsey on; or you kin take it off and stir the fire with it in a way that would depress the spirits of a man with a real leg. It makes the most efficient potato masher you ever say. Work it

from the second joint, and let the knee swing loose, you can tack carpets splendid with the heel; and for cats!—why, when a cat sees that leg coming at him from the winder, he adjourns *sine die* and goes off the fence screaming. Now, you're probably afeard of dogs. When you see one approaching, you always change your base. Wall, I don't blame you; I used to be that way before I lost my home-made leg. But you fix yourself with this artificial extremity, and then what do you care for dogs? If a million of them come at you, what's the odds? You merely stand still and smile, and throw out your spare leg, and let 'em chaw, let 'em tool with that as much as they've a mind to, and howl and carry on, what do you need to care? And that's the reason why I say that when I reflect on how imposing you'd be as the owner of such a leg, I feel like saying that if you insist on offering only a dollar and a half for it, why, take it; it's yours. I'm not the kinder man to stand on trifles. I'll take it off and wrap it up in paper for you; shall I?"

"I'm sorry," said Brown, "but the fact is I have no use for it. I've got two good legs already. If I ever lose one, why, then maybe I'll——"

"I don't think you exactly catch my idea on the subject," said the stranger. "Now, any man kin have a meat and muscle leg; they're as common as grass. It's disgusting how monotonous people are about such things. But I take you for a man who wants to be original. You have style about you. You go it alone, as it were. Now, if I had your peculiarities, do you know what I'd do? I'd get a leg snatched off some way, so's I could walk around on this one. Or if you hate to go to the expense of amputation, why not get your pantaloons altered and mount this beautiful work of art just as you stand?

A centipede—a mere ridicklous insect—has half a bushel of legs, and why can't a man, the grandest creature on earth, own three? You go around this community on three legs and your fortune's made. People will go wild over you as the three-legged grocer: the nation will glory in you: you will be heard of from pole to pole. It'll build up your business. People'll flock everywheres to see you, and you'll make your sugar and cheese and things fairly boom. Look at it as an advertisment. Look at it in any way you choose, and there's money in it—there's glory, there's immortality. I think I see you now moving over this floor, with your old legs working as usual, and this one going clickety-click along with them making music for you all the time, and attracting attention in a way to fill a man's heart with rapture. Now, look at it that way; and if it strikes you, I tell you what I'll do: I'll actually swap that imperishable leg off to you for two pounds of biscuits and a tin cup full of whisky. Is it a go?"

Then Brown weighed out the biscuits, gave the man an awful drink of whisky, and told him if he would take them as a present and quit, he would confer a favour. And he did. After emptying the biscuits into his pockets, and smacking his lips over the whisky, he went to the door, and as he opened it he said:—

"Wall, good bye. But if you really do want a leg, Old Reliable is ready for you: it's yours. I consider that you've got a mortgage on it, and you kin foreclose at any time. I dedicate this leg to you. My will shall mention it: and if you don't need it when I die, I'm going to put it in the savings bank to draw interest until you check it out. I'll bid you good-evening."

"Tall talk"—the amusing style of boasting about the superiority of his own country, which is still so characteristic of the typical American—especially in his travels—springs probably from the same source as the preposterous exaggeration that distinguishes his wit. One American, on being asked about the boundaries of his country, replied, "Our country, sir, is bounded on the north by the aurora borealis, on the east by the rising sun, on the south by the procession of the equinoxes, and on the west by the day of judgment."

It used to be a popular joke with the American when visiting this country, and speaking of its comparative minuteness, that it was risky to walk out after dark lest one should fall over the edge.

It was another popular joke when war with Britain was spoken about, that if war began, the Americans would have to come over and tow the British Isles up the Mississippi.

Sometimes American boastfulness becomes all the more amusing when it betrays itself unconsciously in a habitual yet unaggressive assumption of superiority. Morley in his *Life of Gladstone* says Gladstone was greatly amused by the story of a Bostonian who, having read Shakespeare for the first time, observed gravely, "I call that a very clever book. I don't suppose there are twenty men in Boston to-day who could have written that book!"

Usually, however, American boasting takes the conscious and dogmatic form. Whatever is wonder-

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"That's one big thing you can't show in America." "No, sir, but we have a cataract in America that would put out that thing in two minutes." —*Page 317.*

ful in other countries, the American has always something at home—like that Lightning Express – to surpass it. When some one was describing a monster hotel in Switzerland that seated five hundred guests in the dining-room an American said, "We have a bigger hotel with us out west. Yes, sir, the dining-table in that hotel is so long that the waiters have to gallop about doing their work on horseback."* When some one on the piazza of the Grand Hotel in Naples was looking at Vesuvius, which was in eruption at the time, he said to some Americans of the party, "That's one big thing you can't show in America," to which one of them replied, "No, sir, but we have a cataract in America that would put out that thing in two minutes."

Every State and every city has something to boast about – something in which it whips creation. I remember thirty years ago, Boston boasting about its big organ; New York about its Central Park; Chicago about its elevators and its pig-killing machines. "Seen our pig-killing machine, sir?" said

*Sometimes Jonathan meets his match. An old Irish woman was selling fruit on Carlisle Bridge in Dublin when two or three American tourists who were trying their hands with the Irish people stopped to have a joke at her expense. One of them taking up one of the water-melons displayed on her stand, said gravely, as he looked at it, "These apples of yours are not much to boast. We have apples in America twice this size." Biddy surveyed the joker from head to foot, and replied in a tone of pity, "Ach, what for should I waste my breath talkin' to a man that mistakes an Irish gooseberry for an apple?"

one enthusiastic Chicago man. "Don't leave without seeing that, sir. Biggest thing in God's creation!"

Every local celebrity was also a star of the first magnitude—was "one of the most remarkable men in this country, sir." As "bug" is American for almost any notably large kind of insect or fly, any prominent man in the south or west is often described as a "big bug." Confederate General Lee was of course a really great man, but I shall never forget the impressiveness with which a tall Virginian, to whom I had mentioned his name, laid his hand upon my shoulder, and said solemnly and slowly, "General Lee, sir? General Lee is the biggest bug alive, sir!"

If the usual incentives to boastfulness are wanting, others are found. In some parts of the South, if they have no parks or big organs or pig-killing machines to boast of, you may hear a man say, after an emphatic squirt of tobacco juice, "Look at our river steamers, sir. They sail faster, and they blow up oftener, and shoot men higher, than any other steamers in this country, sir!" And if there is no man in the district who could well be described as the biggest bug alive, there is still somebody who owns some kind of unrivalled distinction. "Look at that man, sir! That man can chaw more tobacco, and spit more, and spit straighter, and spit farther, than any man in this country, sir!"

In the South, which I travelled through in 1868 when it lay prostrate after the war, it yet seemed to be an abiding consolation with the people that the

war had been at least a big war—"an almighty big war, sir!" It was the same with the Chicago people after the great fire of 1871. They seemed to find some consolation in the thought that in the matter of big conflagrations they had now "whipped creation." Even swindling is apt in America to be not only forgiven but admired, if it is only on a huge enough scale.

One reason assuredly why the Americans delighted so much in Barnum was that his show was the biggest in the world; and was trumpeted as no show on the planet had ever been before. His advertising was on a vaster scale: his posters were more glaring; his pictures more astounding; his flags more patriotic; and the wonders of his show really greater than were anywhere else to be seen. One year, when a bright comet appeared in the heavens, and the papers were full of it, Barnum promptly announced that he had specially engaged this comet for a tour round the universe; and that places could now be booked. He added, as an encouragement to those who might be doubtful about the trip, that this was no ramshackle comet like some others that could be named: that it was in thoroughly good repair: that every provision had been made for the comfort of the passengers; and special arrangements made to avoid all risk of collision with other heavenly bodies. He further suggested that botanists, geologists, and other scientists should provide themselves with facilities for the collection and preservation of specimens from

other spheres on the way, that the scientific world might be enriched by these on their return, which was timed for about a hundred years. Had Barnum been able to translate his joke into a reality, no doubt he would have done it; and if, in any of the stars passed *en route* he had seen any shows superior to his own, he would never have rested till he had been able to advertise his as not only the biggest in the world, but the biggest in the whole universe.

Another form of American humour seems to spring from the spirit of freedom and independence—a spirit found everywhere in the States—in the American man, more in the American woman, most of all in the American child—showing itself very often in an utter disregard, and even defiance, of conventionality.

When a young lady was remonstrated with for doing something which her more conventional friend declared to be improper, she replied, "If I choose to do it, it becomes proper."

When travelling round the Southern States in 1863, I remember at Montgomery, Alabama, being introduced to the Secretary of State, who received us cordially in his shirt-sleeves. The day was warm; why should he put on his coat when he felt airier and more comfortable without it?

This disposition to treat old notions of conventionality and decorum with entire independence is most conspicuous amongst the children. At a friend's house in Boston, a very small boy, freshly

graduated out of babyhood, was (as the American custom is) sitting at the table with the grown folk, partaking of everything he had a fancy for, and taking his share also in the conversation. When his mother observed that some crumbs of pastry were sticking outside his lip, she said, "George, wipe your lips." "Wipe my lips?" echoed the boy in a tone of offended dignity. "Say 'please!'" "Well, darling, 'please.'" Being now, in his opinion, politely requested to do so, young precocity took his table-napkin and wiped his lips carefully, glancing round the table with the air of one who had given his mother a needful lesson in the respect due to the rising generation.

I heard of another little boy—a mere child—who got separated from his mother in the street, and (after wandering about for a time looking for her) began to cry. A gentleman who was passing stopped, and stooping down, said kindly, "What ails you, little one?" To whom the child replied with mingled grief and bitterness, "I'm lost. Mamma's lost me. I told the darned old thing she'd lose me if she didn't take more care."

Even in the names sometimes given to places and persons in America, independence of conventional usage reveals itself. Matthew Arnold said, after his tour in the States, that many of these names affected him like the pricking of pins. And certainly some of them are more conspicuous for their Republican freedom than for their good taste. One place is

called "A B C"! another is called "Beef Hide"! another "Hats Off"! another "Uncle Sam"! another "Hartshorn"! another "Henpeck"! another "Marrow-bone"! another "Bugaboo"! another "Why Not"? another "Dammit"!

Names given to children have also shown in some cases the same free and easy disregard of old usage, and been of the nature of practical jokes. In Vermont there was a family in which the three children were named "Joseph," "And," "Another." It was understood that any further additions would be christened "Moreover," "Nevertheless," and "Notwithstanding."

The names given to some of their drinks illustrate the same tendency. One well-known kind of drink is called a "cocktail." A variety of it is an "eye-opener"; another, a "corpse-reviver."

Hence also the free and independent way of handling the English language, which has at some points led to its development. Such terms as "mailing" a letter and "cabling" a message were originally American, though now established among ourselves. But we do not as yet speak of "costuming" or "excurting," or about a house being "burgled." We all speak about "cyclists," but not yet about "walkists."

In poetic forms the poetry of Walt Whitman, not only in its substance, but in its abandonment of metrical arrangement, was another bold innovation on conventionality. This peculiarity was adopted

more naturally, and often with funny effect, by serio-comic poets.

To Snaix.

Prodiggus reptile! long and scaly kuss!
You are the drattedest, biggest thing I ever
Seed that could ty itself into a double bo-
Not, and come all strate again in a
Minnit or so, without winkin' or seemin'
To experience any particular pane
In the diafram.

Stoopenjus inseck! marvelous annimile
You air, I reckon, more'n 7000 years
Old, and hav a considerable of a
Family sneekin' around thru the tall
Grass in Africa, a-eetin' up little greezy
Niggers, and a-wishin' they were bigger.
You air havin' a nice time of it here, I reckon
Livin' on phrogs, and rabbits, and polly-
Wogs, and sutch things.
I wonder now if vittles taste good
All the way down. I expec' so,
At least for 6 or 7 feet.

So mighty long you air, I shud think
If yure tale was kold, yure hed
Woodn't no it till nex' day,
But it's hard to tell. Snaix is snaix.

Farewell to the 'Skeeters.

Vane, hummin' but inhuman inseck,
Yole see by lookin' at the Allmynac
That it's time to dee part onto
Some other climb.

Your gettin' teejus bobbin' around,
A-suckin' other people's blud.
Why don't yer go? The roz leave is fel
To the ground, and orl Natur beckons ye away.
I've got up nites, and gin ye a hint
With the fether duster to leaf my premises,
And wept at yore obstinacy
In stickin' to my vanes.
Why don't yer go down South
To our cullered bruther?
Where you won't have to bite
Thro' woolin' close.

The blundering and apparently idiotic style of spelling—a style adopted even by American humorists like Artemus Ward and Josh Billings—is probably assumed in order to suggest simplicity and ignorance, and give therefore an increased sense of surprise and enjoyment by its contrast with the wit and wisdom sometimes unfolded in this rustic garb.

American oratory has also its form of reckless freedom, and the very unconventionality and unexpectedness of many of the figures of speech which the orators employ make some of them as amusing as they are distinctive.

Nowhere else than in America would a member of the Legislature, in the course of a speech on finance, speak about "the bird of freedom that spreads his noble pinions to soar beyond the azure regions of the hyperboreal pole."

Nowhere else than in America would we find even the most extravagant Administration described as "a lot of spavined, ring-boned, ham-strung, pot-bellied politicians, who had got their noses into the public crib, and kept them there till there wasn't fodder enough left to make gruel for a sick grasshopper."

Nowhere else could we hear a peroration like the following, which terminated a mighty speech on a contested seat case:—"But, sir, when the news of the next election arrives from the virgin soil of the White Mountain districts, it will squelch your Star Chamber Committees; and amidst the roar of Niagara and the echoes of the surrounding universe, will be heard the small still voice of my constituents saying louder than ten thousand thunders, 'Samuel Jones, you are a hoss!'"

In all kinds of odd ways, departure from old-world conventional usage shows itself. I remember, in New Orleans, when I went to a newspaper office to get some information from the editor, I found a card with the following startling inscription stuck outside his door:—

> NOTICE!
>
> Any person desiring to see the Editor just now will be shot.

In the sphere of religion, the same tendency reveals itself in a certain irreverence that sometimes offends, but that is in many cases very amusing. I remember, in Boston, when reference was made to a prominent and philanthropic citizen whose death had been announced in that morning's papers, a gentleman remarked, "Heaven is becoming quite respectable."

In the same city, when an extremely orthodox man, in a discussion about Emerson, declared that, with the views Emerson had, he must inevitably go to hell, a broader-minded Wesleyan minister, popularly known in Boston as "Father" Taylor, replied, "If Emerson goes to hell, he will change the climate." It was not only a characteristic and witty reply, but one that suggested a great truth.

A story, probably apocryphal but not the less illustrative of this phase of American character, is told of an energetic local politician who never lost an opportunity of advocating his views on the subject of the tariff. At an execution which was taking place in the town, the condemned man on being led up to the scaffold, was asked if he had anything to say before being turned off. A pause ensued, and the people held their breath to listen, whereupon the political orator, fearing that so rare an opportunity might be lost, stepped briskly forward and said, "As our unfortunate fellow-citizen is not desirous of saying anything at the present moment, I shall be glad, with your permission, to improve this impressive occasion

by offering a few remarks with regard to the new protective tariff."

There is also a certain grim humour about the story of General Pendleton in the Civil War. He was a clergyman before the war broke out, but having been a graduate at West Point, he joined the army, and had command of a battery at the battle of Manasses. The story is that he would stand by a gun, point it himself at the enemy, and say, "Now, boys, are you ready?" "Yes." "Then may the Lord have mercy on the poor sinners!—Fire!"

The free-and-easy and unconventional treatment of religious topics reaches its height in Dow's "Patent Sermons," one specimen from which will suffice. In a sermon on children, he says that if he were afflicted with ungrateful children, he would "put them in a hencoop, and feed them upon bran till spontaneous gratitude oozed out at the very sight of a cold potato."

In avowedly humorous American writings, one comes continually upon this style of referring to religious and scriptural topics—as when Hans Breitmann, in his German-English, describes the heaven of popular theology—not without some reason—as "von huge eternal sphree."

The story of Colonel Bangs and the obituary verses, in Mark Adeler's *Out of the Hurly Burly*, is an amusing specimen of the same kind of humour. Colonel Bangs, of the *Argus*, had observed the dis-

position of bereaved families to give expression to their feelings in verse, and it occurred to him that special provision might be made for this, with the effect of not only gratifying the bereaved, but at the same time bringing profit to the *Argus* by making it the popular vehicle for conveying notices of deaths to the public. Moreover, he had a country contributer who had frequently sent him for publication poems of a distressing character: and he thought he might, by bringing this man to the town and adding him to the staff of the *Argus*, profitably employ his peculiar and melancholy gift. This accordingly was done.

When Mr. Slimmer arrived—Slimmer was the doleful poet's name—Colonel Bangs explained his theory, and suggested that whenever a death notice reached the office Slimmer should immediately write a rhyme or two which should express the sentiments most suitable to the occasion.

"You understand, Mr. Slimmer," said the Colonel, "that I want you in this way to cheer the members of the afflicted family with the resources of your noble art."

"I quite understand," said Mr. Slimmer; "and it will be a labour of love."

"Touch the heart-strings of the bereaved with a tender hand, Mr. Slimmer, and seek to divert their minds from the mere horrors of the tomb."

"Seeking rather," responded Mr. Slimmer, "to lift their thoughts to——"

"Just so! And you can combine this elevating sentiment with such practical information as you can obtain from the advertisement. Throw the glamour of poetry over the commonplace details of the deceased's every-day life, Mr. Slimmer. People are fond of particulars—very fond, I observe, of minute description. You will not forget this. Some facts useful for the purpose may be obtained from the man who brings the notice, others you will, no doubt, be able to supply from your imagination."

"There should be no difficulty there," said Mr. Slimmer.

It was unfortunate, however, that Colonel Bangs did not warn Mr. Slimmer to make sure in all cases of the facts, that his imagination might have the right materials to work with. It was also unfortunate that the Colonel was unexpectedly called away on important business on the day on which Mr. Slimmer began his work, and was not therefore available for reference.

Returning on the following morning, he was surprised to see a crowd of excited people at the door of the *Argus* office; and he had no sooner got into his sanctum by the back door than the room was invaded by several persons, each one looking more furious than the other.

"Sir!" shouted one of them, stepping forward, with a brow like thunder, "I demand to know who authorised you to print in your paper to-day this ludicrous stuff about my deceased son?—

"'Willie had a purple monkey, climbing on a yellow stick,
And when he sucked the paint all off, it made him deathly sick;
And in his latest hours he clasped that monkey in his hand,
And bade good-bye to earth and went into a better land.

"'No more he'll shoot his sister with his little wooden gun;
And no more he'll twist the pussy's tail and make her yowl, for fun;
The pussy's tail now stands out straight, the gun is laid aside;
The monkey doesn't jump around since little Willie died.'

"The atrocious character of this libel, sir, will appear when I tell you that my son William was twenty years old, and that he died of liver complaint."

"Really," said Colonel Bangs, "this is horrible—infamous! But, sir, it's a mistake—it's the work of a miscreant, done in my absence. But he shall suffer for it—he shall be punished, sir."

At this moment the people crowding the doorway moved aside to allow a woman to enter, who, addressing Colonel Bangs, exclaimed hysterically, "Are you the editor?" Bangs said he was.

"Then what do you mean," she exclaimed, "publishing this kind of poetry about my child? My

name is Smith, and when I looked this morning for the notice of my Johnny's death, I found this scandalous verse:—

"'Four doctors tackled Johnny Smith,
They blistered and they bled him;
With squills and antibilious pills
And ipecac. they fed him;
They stirred him up with calomel,
And tried to move his liver;
But all in vain—his little soul
Was wafted o'er the river.'

"It's false!" exclaimed the woman, excitedly—"false and mean! And you're a hard-hearted brute for printing it."

"Madam, I shall go crazy!" exclaimed Colonel Bangs. "This is not my work. It is the work of a villain who will get stirred up with something stronger than calomel!"

At this juncture the Sheriff, whose daughter Hannah had died, entered the sanctum, wanting the blood of the man who had dared to add the following doggerel to the obituary notice:—

"We have lost our little Hanner in a very painful manner,
And we often asked, How can her harsh sufferings be borne?
When her death was first reported, her aunt got up and snorted
With the grief that she supported, for it made her feel forlorn.

"She was such a little seraph, that her father, who is Sheriff,
Really doesn't seem to care if he ne'er smiles in life again.
She has gone (we hope) to Heaven, at the early age of seven
(Funeral starts off at eleven), where she'll never more have pain."

"Sir!" said the Sheriff fiercely, "this is monstrous! As a consequence of this, sir, I withdraw all the county advertising from your paper."—The Colonel groaned.—"A man," continued the Sheriff, "who could trifle in this style with the feelings of a parent is a savage and a scoundrel!"

The Sheriff had scarcely turned indignantly to leave, when an infuriated man entered.

"Look here, you disgraceful reprobate!" he cried, holding out a copy of the *Argus*, "what do you mean by putting in such stuff as this about my deceased son?—

"'O bury Bartholomew out in the woods,
In a beautiful hole in the ground,
Where the bumble-bees buzz and the woodpeckers sing,
And the straddle-bugs tumble around;
So that in winter, when the snow and the slush
Have covered his last little bed,
His brother Artemus can go out with Jane
And visit the place with his sled!'

"You dissolute old ink-slinger, I'll teach you to talk about straddle-bugs! 'Go out with his sled!' You'll go out on a hearse before I've done with you, you hoary-headed old ghoul!"

"This is too much!" cried Colonel Bangs, distractedly. "It is outrageous! It is the work of a scoundrel who is not here. But, take my word for it, he will suffer for it! Yes, sir, the lunatic shall die!"

Mr. Slimmer did not die; but his services for obituary verses were not required for the *Argus* again.

The danger ascribed to these current and amazingly popular forms of American humour is that they tend to drive reverence and solemnity out of the field, as the higher drama is being supplanted by the opera comique and the half-naked ballet-girls. An eminent critic thinks it is clearing the way for comic Dantes and a comic Bible. But the counteracting influences in American literature, and in the essential seriousness of the American character, must not be forgotten.

Even the oddest forms of American wit and humour are not unnatural when we think of American environment and history. When we consider what the Americans have accomplished, and the sensational, and often grotesquely startling, features of their actual experiences, the extravagance of their wit will seem not so very far in excess of the visible realities.

Their amusing boastfulness when they come

amongst us is (after all) natural when we consider at how many points, in spite of all our advantages, they have outstripped us. With their rapid adaptation to new conditions, through their devising of new methods, through quickness to see the advantages of new processes, through their eager spirit of discovery and enterprise, they have beaten us even in points where we thought ourselves strong. Take machinery. Though we, in the old country, turn out a larger number of machines, it is the Americans who invent the new ones. Look at the modern printing-press. Look at the sewing machine, the washing machine, the binding machine, the phonograph, the cinematograph. Look also at the breech-loading guns, which have everywhere supplanted the muzzle-loaders. Look at the revolver, and the repeating-rifle. These are all American inventions. The reaping-machine, though really the invention of a Scotchman, was never fitted for practical use till an American (Maccormick) took it up and showed the way. And though the inventor of the telephone (Graham Bell) was also a Scotchman, it was not till he went out to America, and had his genius vitalised by the atmosphere of American life, that his telephone came into existence; while Edison, whose inventions in the same sphere are legion, is American altogether.

Need we wonder that the Americans, under such circumstances, tend to boast a good deal, that their oratory has so much in it of the florid and inflated, and that their very wit takes so much the form of

wild and ludicrous exaggeration, like grotesque prophecy of actual achievements. Need we wonder that the consciousness of novel and extraordinary power and fertility of resource should make the Americans look more to the future than the past, and make Old World notions and conventionalities and dogmas sit lightly upon them, and seem fit subjects for reckless jocularity?

Other features of their history and character reveal themselves in the same comical fashion.

They are an inventive people, and they joke about it. They tell about a man who has patented a machine warranted to chase a pig round a ten-acre lot, and turn its flesh into pork sausages, its ears into purses, and its tail into first-class shaving brushes, all within the space of forty-five minutes!

Another man claimed to have patented a kind of nest that would revolutionise the egg trade. The nest was of india-rubber, and had a false bottom, so that when the hen laid an egg it passed quietly through. The hen would look down, see no egg, think there had been some mistake, and proceed to lay another, with the same result. The patentee assured dairy farmers that there was a mint of money in it.

The American passion for newspapers is also joked about. It is said that if two Americans were put ashore on a desert island, the first thing they would do would be to start a newspaper. They tell of a preacher who, after thundering over a congregation

for some time in vain with all the terrors of the law, suddenly paused, and when the attention of the people was in this way arrested, said impressively, "Brethren, one word of warning, and I am done. If you don't turn right-about-face, and live better lives, you'll go to a place—whar there ain't no newspapers!"

The Americans are a trading people—the real "nation of shopkeepers"—and they joke about that also. After the battle of Gettysburg, when the hospitals were crowded with the wounded, and the doctors were going round examining the cases and giving instructions to the nurses, one man, who learned from them that both his legs were to be amputated, was found, before the doctors returned for the operation, to have sold his boots for a good price to the man next him, as the boots were to be of no further use to himself.

They tell of another man, who was an agent for war maps, that when attacked by a party of Indians, he requested them to delay scalping him till he had shown and explained to them his maps, which he did with such success that he ended by getting them to buy several, and inducing the chief to become Indian agent for the firm.

Josh Billings, in referring to Jonah, declared that if Jonah had been a Yankee, he would, when he found himself in the whale's belly, have rigged up a rudder, run the whale into the nearest port, and either claimed the oil for salvage, or sold out his territory.

The Americans are also a smart people—fit for anything—ready to undertake at a moment's notice what the staider people of the Old World need time to consider—and not caring to lose time over formalities. And they joke about it. They tell of a lady whose husband had left home as usual after breakfast for his day's work at the store, that she received the wire: "Don't wait dinner. I'm off to Europe." They tell of an engineer who, as he could not get leave of absence for his marriage, arranged with his bride to be in waiting with a minister at a junction where the train had to stop for four minutes. The two were there ready, and the engineer jumped off, had the knot tied, jumped on again, and resumed his journey. They tell also about a runaway couple on horseback, who dashed up to the office of a Justice of the Peace, with the bride's father in pursuit. They handed particulars and a double fee to the Justice, telling him there was not a moment to lose. "All right," he said. "Join hands. Do you take her to be your wife?" "Yes." "Do you take him?" "Yes." "That's right. Now you're hitched. Good bye." The happy pair retired smiling, and the irate parent, on his foaming steed, met them at the door, to find that he was just too late.*

Amongst the clerical humorists of America, the

* The following case, reported in December, 1897, as having actually taken place in the neighbourhood of New York, is not far short of the jocular one:—

best known is Henry Ward Beecher. His powers as a divine, as a pulpit and platform orator, a litterateur, and a reformer, were all great; and his gift of humour gave an additional zest and a wider range to them all. He did not object to a laugh even in church. He said that it acted like fire in a sooty chimney: it cleared the flue and improved the draught. He never went out of his way to be funny in the pulpit; but—as was the case also with Spurgeon—if any witty remark or humorous illustration occurred to him that promised to make his thought more clear or carry it home with more force to the people, he never hesitated to use it.

Here are one or two of his odd sayings:—

Referring to people who are great in Christian profession but very small in Christian practice, he said, "Some people pray cream and live skim milk."

"The bride and bridegroom met for the first time at a reception at a friend's house. She was a handsome widow of thirty. He was a hotel proprietor. As soon as he saw her he asked to be introduced. Exactly half an hour after, he proposed and was accepted. The next minute he informed her he did not believe in long engagements, and saw no reason why they should not be married without delay. The lady acquiesced. The gentleman explained that 'No delay' in his case meant immediately. The host and hostess were informed of the matter, and the then prospective bridegroom proposed that the reception should become an impromptu wedding party. They telephoned to a neighbouring Justice of the Peace, and he came to the house at once. Exactly fifty minutes after they had met, the magistrate concluded the ceremony, and they were man and wife."

Speaking of people who exercise themselves more in puzzling over the origin of evil than in trying to get rid of it, he said, "These people begin at the wrong end. What would you think of a man who, if he saw a pig in his garden, should begin to discuss the question how that pig could have got in, when the pig is busy all the time rooting up his potatoes? No; the first thing is to drive the pig out. Let us drive sin from our hearts and from the world. Let this be our business here. We shall have a whole eternity afterwards to ascertain how it got in at first."

Speaking of those worshippers of Mammon who are yet particular in making profession of religion, he said, "They are not satisfied with a competence: they must have it five storeys high. And then they want religion as a sort of lightning-rod to their houses, to ward off the bolts of divine wrath."

Upbraiding his people on one occasion for the meanness of their contributions for the poor, he said, "There are hundreds of men here who ought to be ashamed ever to give anything but gold, or at least a dollar-bill, and they *are* ashamed to do it. Don't they, when the plate approaches, and they have put their fingers in their pockets and selected a *quarter*, use admirable tact in conveying it to the plate, so that no one shall see what they give? Pious souls! they don't let their left hand know what their right doeth. If they have two bills, one

good, one bad, they will generally give the bad one to the Lord."

Mr. Zincke heard Beecher say, in preaching against American intemperance, that "an American had not the same excuse which a Scotchman had, for the latter got so much water outside that there was some reason for his never taking any inside."

At one of his week-night lectures, he was speaking about the building and equipping of new churches. After a few satirical touches about church architects and their work, he went on to ridicule the usual style of pulpit—the "sacred mahogany tub"—"plastered up against some pillar like a barn-swallow's nest." Then he passed on to the erection of the organ, and to the opening recital, as follows:—

"The organ long expected has arrived, been unpacked, set up, and gloried over. The great players of the region round about, or of distant celebrity, have made it show its capabilities; and the magnificent instrument has been put through all its paces in a manner which has surprised every one, and, if it had had a conscious existence, must have surprised the organ itself most of all. It has piped, fluted, trumpeted, brayed, thundered. It has played so loud that everybody was deafened, and so soft that nobody could hear. The pedals played for thunder, the flutes languished and coquetted, and the swell died away in delicious suffocation, like one singing a sweet song under the bed-clothes. Now

it leads down a stupendous waltz with full brass, sounding very much as if, in summer, a thunderstorm should play, 'Come, Haste to the Wedding,' or 'Monymusk.' Then come marches, galops, and hornpipes. An organ playing hornpipes ought to have elephants as dancers.

"At length a fugue is to show the whole scope and power of the instrument. The theme, like a cautious rat, peeps out to see if the coast is clear; and, after a few hesitations, comes forth and begins to frisk a little, and run up and down to see what it can find. It finds just what it did not want, a purring tenor lying in ambush and waiting for a spring; and as the theme comes incautiously near, the savage cat of a tenor springs at it, misses its hold, and then takes after it with terrible earnestness. But the tenor has miscalculated the agility of the theme. All that it could do, with the most desperate effort, was to keep the theme from running back into its hole again; and so they ran up and down, around and around, dodging, eluding, whipping in and out of every corner and nook, till the whole organ was aroused, and the bass began to take part, but unluckily slipped and rolled down stairs, and lay at the bottom raving and growling in the most awful manner, and nothing could appease it. Sometimes the theme was caught by one part, and dandled for a moment, then, with a snatch, another part took it and ran off exultant, until, unawares, the same trick was played on it; and,

finally, all the parts, being greatly exercised in mind, began to chase each other promiscuously in and out, up and down, now separating and now rushing in full tilt together, until everything in the organ loses patience and all the 'stops' are drawn, and, in spite of all that the brave organist could do— who bobbed up and down, feet, hands, head, and all—the tune broke up into a real row, and every part was clubbing every other one, until at length, patience being no longer a virtue, the organist, with two or three terrific crashes, put an end to the riot, and brought the great organ back to silence."

Amongst the many sparkling speech-makers and talkers of America, perhaps no one man living has a wider reputation than Mr. Choate, late American Ambassador to Britain, who combines a ready wit with all Charles Dickens' fluency and geniality in after-dinner oratory. Once, at a friend's dinner table, some one asked him who he would like to be if he were not himself. He paused for a few seconds, as if thinking over the world's most estimable and enviable men, and then his eye rested on his wife. "If I could not be myself," he said, "I should like to be Mrs. Choate's second husband!"

On another occasion, at a public dinner in New York given by the New York Scots, and at which Lord Aberdeen, the then Governor-General of Canada, was the principal guest, his Lordship, in honour of his Scottish entertainers, appeared in his

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kilts. The first speaker to follow Lord Aberdeen was Mr. Choate, who began by remarking that had he known that he was to have the honour of sitting next to the illustrious "Gordon of the Gordons," he too might have found courage to come without his trousers! It was a somewhat audacious joke, but no one laughed more heartily at it than Aberdeen himself.

Looking at American humour as it appears in literature, two currents are very easily distinguishable. The higher and more genial is represented by Washington Irving, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Bret Harte; also by Lowell, even in his "Biglow Papers." For Yankee dialect is as legitimate a garb for Yankee humour as Scotch is for the humour of Burns, or the Lincolnshire dialect for the ideas of Tennyson's "Northern Farmer."

Lowell himself defended the Yankee dialect as "a young language that has not made its fortune;" and declared that what are called "vulgarisms in language," are often "poetry in the egg."

The other and broader strain of American humour runs into burlesque. Perhaps the first of the famous burlesque writers of this type in America was Artemus Ward (C. F. Browne), whose amusing sketches attracted the more attention in this country because at the time such universal interest was taken in the American Civil War, some phases of which Artemus Ward seized upon and presented with great drollery. Everybody remembers the patriotism of the man who was prepared to sacrifice

to the sacred cause of the Union all his wife's relations; and of the "young man who was drawed [in the conscription], but claimed to be exemp', because he was the only son of a widowed mother — who supported him."

The account of the way in which, as a young lover, he popped the question "to his Betsy Jane," is very racy:—

"'Twas a carm still night in Joon. All natur was husht, and nary zeffer disturbed the sereen silens. I sot with Betsy Jane on the fense of her father's pastur. We sot thar a-swingin' our feet two and fro, blushin' as red as the Ballinsville Skool-house when it was first painted, and lookin' very simple I make no doubt. My left arm was occupied in ballansin myself on the fense: my rite was wounded luvinly round her waste.

"I cleared my throat, and tremblingly sed, 'Betsy, you're a gazelle.'

"I thought that air putty fine. I waited to see what effeck it would have upon her. It evidently didn't fetch her, for she up and said—

"'And you're a sheep.'

"Sez I, 'Betsy, I think mighty much of you.'

"'I don't believe a word you say — so there now, cum!'—with which obsarvashun she hitched away from me.

"'I wish thar was winders in my sole,' sed I, 'so you could see some of my feelins. There's fire enuff in here,' sed I, strikin' my buzzum with my fist, 'to

bile all the corn beef and turnips in the naberhood. Versoovius and the Critter ain't a circumstans!'

"She bow'd her hed down, and commenst chawin' the strings of her sun-bonnet.

"'Ah! could you know the sleeplis nites I worry threw on your account, how vittles has seized to be an attraction to me, and how my lims has shrunk up, you wouldn't doubt me. Gase on this wastin' form, and these ere sunken cheeks——' I should have continued on in this strane probably for some time, but, unfortunately, I lost my ballanse and fell over into the pastur ker smash, tearin' my close, and severely damigin' myself ginerully.

"Betsy Jane sprang to my assistance in double quick time, and dragged me 4th. Then drawin' herself up to her full hite, she sed—

"'I won't listen to your noncents no longer. You say rite strate out what you're drivin at. If you mean gettin' hitched, I'm in.'"

The humorist's account of his own lecture in London is also a good specimen of his style: "It was a grand scene, Mr. Artemus Ward standing on the platform talking; many of the audience sleeping tranquilly on their seats; others leaving the room and not returning; others crying like a child at some of the jokes—all, all formed a most impressive scene, and showed the powers of this remarkable orator. And when he announced that he should never lecture in the city again, the applause was absolutely deafening."

While Artemus Ward's favourite form is broad burlesque, it has been urged, with good reason, in favour of even his broadest, that it is directed against mean or ridiculous things. It has therefore to be distinguished from the buffoonery that brings contempt on things that are worthy of respect and reverence.

C. G. Leland, in his *Hans Breitmann's Ballads*, gives us his humour in the German-Yankee dialect, with a very funny blending of sentiment and metaphysics. Here is a specimen:—

HANS BREITMANN'S "BARTY."

Hans Breitmann gife a barty,
Dey had biano-blayin',
I fell in love mit a 'Merican frau,
Her name was Matilda Yane.
She had haar as prown as a pritzel,
Her eyes were himmel-plue;
Und when dey looket indo mine
Dey shplit mine heart in dwo.

Hans Breitmann gife a barty,
I went dere, you'll be pound;
I waltzet mit Matilda Yane,
Und vent shpinnen round und round.
De pootiest fraulein in de house,
She vayed 'pout dwo hoondred pound;
Und efery dime she gife a shoomp
She made the vindows sound.

After describing the festivities, he closes with the characteristic verse:—

Hans Breitmann gife a barty—
Vhere ish dat barty now?
Vhere ish de lovely golden cloud
Dat float on de moundain's brow?
Vhere ish de himmelstrahlende stern—
De shtar of de shpirit's light?
All goned afay mit de lager beer—
Afay in de ewigheit!

Cyclists ought to read with interest the same humorist's ballad of the cycle when still a wonder, and of the "scorcher's" prototype:—

Herr Schnitzerl make a philosopede,
Von of the pullyest kind;
It vent mitout a vheel in front,
And hadn't none pehind.
Von vheel vas in de mittel, dough,
And it vent as sure as ecks,
For he straddled on de axle dree,
Mit de vheel petween his lecks.

Und ven he vant to shtart it off,
He paddlet mit his veet;
Und soon he cot to go so vast,
Dat every dings he peat.
He run her out on Broader shtreed;
He shkeeted like der vind;
Hei! how he bassed de vancy crabs,
And lef dem all pehind!

De vellers mit de trotting nags
  Pooled oop to see him bass;
De Deutschers all enstoundished said,
  "Potztausend! Wat ist das!"
Boot vaster still der Schnitzerl flewed
  On—mit a ghashtly smile;
He tidn't tooch de ground, by shings.
  Not vonce in half a mile.

Oh, vot ish all dis earthly pliss?
  Oh, vot ish man's sooksess?
Oh, vot ish various kinds of dings?
  Und vot ish habbiness?
Ve find a panknote in the shtreedt;
  Next dings der pank is preak;
Ve folls, and knocks our outsides in,
  Ven ve a ten shtrike make.

So vas it mit der Schnitzerlein
  On his philosopede,
His feet both shlipped outsideward shoot,
  Ven at his extra shpeed.
He felled upon der vheel, of course,
  De vheel like blitzen flew,
Un Schnitzerl he was cut in vact,
  For id shlished him straight in two.

Und as for his philosopede,
  Id cot so shkared, men say,
It bounded onward till it vent
  Quite teufelwards afay.
Boot vere ish now de Schnitzerl's soul?
  Vere dos his shbirit pide?
In Himmel, troo de endless plue,
  It takes a medeor ride.

Josh Billings (E. P. Hingston) is a humorist of a different type, clothing his wit, wisdom, and satire in the form of amusing aphorisms, reflections, and touches of satire. Here are specimens :—

"If I was asked 'What is the chief end of man now-a-daze?' I should immegiatly repli, 10 per cent."

"There is 2 things in this life for which we are never fully prepared, and that iz twins."

"If you want tew git a sure crop, and a big yield for the seed, sow wilde oats."

"Man was kreated a little lower than the angels, and has bin gittin' a little lower ever since."

"It is dredful eazy tew be a phool—a man kan be one and not know it."

"Misfortin and twins hardly ever cum singly."

"If there waz nothing but truth in this wurld, a fool would stand as good a chanse az a wize man."

"Real happiness don't consist so mutch in what a man has, as it duz in what he don't want."

"Some people are fond of bragging abowt their ansestors and their grate descent, when their grate descent is just what iz the matter with them."

Josh divided "snaiks into 1 klass—devlish."

He had a poor opinion of opera music. He said it didn't have any more effect on him than castor oil on a graven image.

Here is Josh's plea for individuality, and for tolerance of it:—"There is sum dogs's tails that

kan't be got to curl no ways, and sum which will and you kan't stop 'em. If you bathe a curly dog's tail in oil, and bind it in splints, you kan't get the crook out ov it. Now, a man's way of thinkin' is the krook in the dog's tail, and kan't be got out; so every one should be alloud to wag his own peculiarity in peace."

"Mr. Dooley" (Peter Finlay Dunne) has given us the Irish-American humour with as much freshness as Hans Breitmann gave the German-American—firing his shots usually at the follies or weaknesses of the passing hour. In some of his quasi-philosophical observations, he reveals the American fondness for exaggeration, of which we have seen so much. Speaking to Mr. Hinnessy of Chinese skill in lying, he says:—"How in th' wurruld can we compete with a counthry where ivry lab'rer's cottage projooces lies so delicate that th' workmen in th' West can't undherstand thim? We make our lies be machinery; they tur'rn out theirs be hand. They imitate th' best of our canned lies to deceive people that likes that kind, but f'r artists they have lies that appeals to a more refined taste. Sure I'd like to live among thim an' find out th' kind ov bouncers they tell each other. They must be gr rand! I on'y know their export lies now—th' surplus lies they can't use at home. An' the kind they send out ar're better than our best."

When Mr. Hennessy, who, as usual, declines to be beaten, says, "Well, they can't hurt us with

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their lies: we have the guns and we'll bate them yet," Mr. Dooley replies, "Yes, an' 'twill be like a man who's had his house desthroyed be a cyclone gettin' up an' kickin' at th' air."

Speaking of the rush to California in 1849 for gold, he said—"We thought all ye had to do was to hold ye're hat and th' goold guineas'd dhrop into it." They heard of one man so covered with gold dust that "his whiskers panned out as much as 30 dollars net."

Mr. Dooley himself was disappointed in the result. "Me own experience with goold mines is that the goold is always in the nex' county. But," he adds reflectively, "I'm thinkin' every man has a goold mine undher his own dure-step—or in his neighbour's pocket at the farthest."

Mr. Dooley makes fun in his own way of some features of the American character. Referring to a great public meeting during the war in Cuba, he said:—"The proceedings was opened wid prayer that Providence would remain undher the protection of the Administration."

"An American's house (he says) is his castle till the mortgage falls due."

He makes a successful office-seeker say to his equally fortunate associates, "Let us dhrink to the Author of our bein' *here*."

Speaking of Education now-a-days, he described the children "sittin' roun' the table wid their noses glued into books."

His own upbringing was different. "The only book I seen was the kind that has the 'Life of the Pope' outside, an' a set of dominoes in the inside."

Of the Apostles' creed, he says—"It nivir was as convincin' to me afther I larned to read as it was whin I couldn't read it but believed it."

Mr. Dooley had a good deal to say about the South African war. Remembering, no doubt, how some of the Southern States managed the negro vote, he gave Hennessy his opinion that "If Kruger had spint his life in a rale raypublic where they burn gas, he cud've settled the business without losin' sleep."

Mr. Hennessy asks how.

"He'd have given them th' votes," says Mr. Dooley—adding significantly, "but he'd have done th' countin'."

Sometimes Mr. Dooley diverges from current events to indulge, like Josh Billings, in a little proverbial philosophy, as when he says:—"A fanatic is a man that does what he thinks the Lord would do if He knew th' facts iv th' case;" and again, "A German's idea iv Hivin is painted blue an' has cast-iron dogs on th' lawn." And again, "Most geniuses are unhappily married; and I guess the same may be said of their wives."

When Mr. Hennessy referred to the apparent enthusiasm of the United States over the cause of the resolute Boers, Mr. Dooley replied, "Th' enthusiasm iv this counthry, Hinnissy, makes me think of

a bonfire on an ice-floe. It burns brightly so long as ye feed it, an' it looks good, but it don't take hold, somehow, on the ice."

Popular as Mr. Dooley and many of the American humorists are, or have been, the best known and most popular is "Mark Twain" (S. L. Clemens). Nor is his popularity to be wondered at, for behind his affected simplicity and innocence there dwells—as may be seen in such books as his *Innocents Abroad*—an almost preternatural shrewdness and power of observation. His satire may sometimes be malignant, but it is never pointless; and even when he wanders about amongst the sublimities with his finger at his nose, it is impossible to keep from being amused, and one is surprised to find on reflection how much he has also been instructed. Of American cynics, Mark Twain is the chief. He hates cant: sees it sometimes where it does not exist: and delights in turning upside down the morals of the copy-book texts which were the moral pabulum of this generation in its school days. With him it is the "bad little boy" who gets on; his "good little boy" always comes to grief. "Train up a child, *and away he goes*," is Mark Twain's rendering of the Scripture proverb. His speeches would make an amusing and characteristic volume; some of his retorts would make a good appendix. When it was reported in America that he had died suddenly in Europe, and a telegram of inquiry was sent to his home, it was replied to by Mark Twain himself in

the characteristic message, "Reports of my death greatly exaggerated."

His "Autobiography" is a highly characteristic specimen of his wit. He describes his "ancestors" with a wink and a backward point of his thumb towards those who try to make out their descent from heroes. Here are one or two extracts:—

"Arthur Twain was a man of considerable note—a solicitor on the highway in William Rufus's time. At about the age of thirty, he went to one of those fine old English places of resort called Newgate, to see about something, and never returned again. While there he died suddenly."

"Early in the fifteenth century we have a Beau Twain, called 'the Scholar.' He wrote a beautiful, beautiful hand, and he could imitate anybody's hand so closely that it was enough to make a person laugh his head off to see it. He had infinite sport with his talent. But by and by he took a contract to break stone for a road, and the roughness of the work spoiled his hand. Still he held on with the stone business for some forty-two years. In fact, he died in harness. During all these years he gave such satisfaction that he never was through with one contract before Government gave him another. He was a perfect pet. He always wore his hair short, had a preference for striped clothes, and died lamented by the Government. He was a sore loss to his country, for he was so regular."

Another ancestor, who "flourished in sixteen

hundred and something, was known in our annals as 'the Admiral,' though in history he had other titles. He was long in command of fleet vessels, well armed and manned, and did great service in hurrying up merchantmen. Vessels which he followed and kept his eagle eye on always made good fast time across the ocean. But if a ship still loitered in spite of all he could do, his indignation would grow till he could contain himself no longer, and then he would take that ship home where he lived, and keep it there carefully, expecting the owners to come for it, but they never did. And he would try to get the idleness and sloth out of the sailors of that ship by compelling them to take invigorating exercise and a bath. He called it 'walking the plank.' All his pupils liked it. At any rate, they never found any fault with it after once trying it. When the owners were late coming for their ships, the 'Admiral' always burned them, so that the insurance money should not be lost. At last this fine old tar was cut down in the fulness of his years and honours. And to her dying day, his poor broken-hearted widow believed that if he had been cut down fifteen minutes sooner he might have been resuscitated."

"Charles Henry Twain lived during the latter part of the seventeenth century, and was a zealous and distinguished missionary. He converted sixteen thousand South Sea islanders, and taught them that a dog-tooth necklace and a pair of spectacles was not enough clothing to come to Divine service in.

His poor flock loved him very, very dearly, and when his funeral was over they got up in a body and came out of the restaurant with tears in their eyes, and saying to one another that he was a good tender missionary, and they wished there had been more of him."

The extent to which burlesque has become a favourite and characteristic element in American literature has been made a ground for charging the Americans as a people with lack of depth and earnestness. But if this charge is regarded as valid against the Americans, the keen and widespread appreciation of American wit in this country, and the enormous sale here of books like those of Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, and Mr. Dooley, means that the same charge can be brought against ourselves.

But it has to be remembered that the very seriousness of life, and the fierce competition that makes life in these days more than ever a struggle for existence and for the supply of continually enlarging wants, create a new necessity for anything that affords amusement and provokes laughter, as a relief from new and manifold cares.

It has also to be remembered that if America laughs a good deal even at herself, it is partly because she feels that she can afford to do it—that under all the faults and foibles that are seized upon by her satirists, and made fun of in so extravagant

a fashion by her own wits and humorists, there is a deep, strong, and earnest life, that can work—and work hard—as well as play: and can address itself to the most serious problems of life not the less earnestly that, in moments of leisure, it can enjoy a laugh.

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